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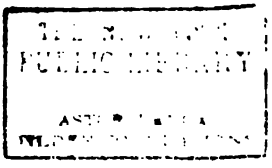
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JOHN VYTAL

John Vytal

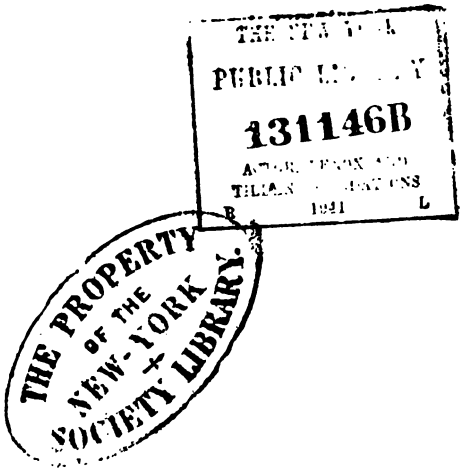
A Tale of The Lost Colony

BY

WILLIAM FARQUHAR PAYSON



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"He was one of a lean body and visage, as if his eager soul, biting for anger at the clog of his body, desired to fret a passage through it."

Thomas Fuller

Foreword

NO epoch in American history is more essentially romantic than that in which, for a few years, less than one hundred colonists from England lived on the island of Roanoke, off the coast of old Virginia. Nevertheless, although the history of our continent, from the landing of Columbus to the end of the Spanish-American war, has been exhaustively exploited in fiction, the pages dated 1587–1598 seem to have been left unturned. Yet the life of the Roanoke colony contained not only adventure, hazard, and privation in a far greater degree than the maturer settlements of later years, but also an underlying emblematical element, and in its end an insoluble riddle. In being thus both *mystical* and *mysterious*, it paramountly inspires romance.

The mystery has filled many pages of history, but always as an enigma without solution. The fate of the colony is utterly unknown, historians of necessity relegating it to the limbo of oblivion.

Bancroft, for one, concludes his account of the colonization thus:

"The conjecture has been hazarded [by Lawson and others] that the deserted colony, neglected by their own countrymen, were hospitably adopted into the tribe of Hatteras Indians, and became amalgamated with the sons of the forest. This was the tradition of the natives at a later day, and was thought to be confirmed by the physical character of the tribe in which the English and the Indian race seemed to have been blended. Raleigh

long cherished the hope of discovering some vestiges of their existence, and, though he had abandoned the design of colonizing Virginia, he yet sent, at his own charge, and, it is said, at five several times, to search for his liege-men. But it was all in vain; imagination received no help in its attempts to trace the fate of the colony of Roanoke."

Opposing this view, many authorities believe that a massacre occurred by which many of the English suffered at the hands of hostile savages. In the ensuing story, however, I have ventured to explain the oblivion of the colony's end in a way which I believe has not yet been suggested.

After this preamble I hasten to assure the reader —perhaps already surfeited with historical novels— that he shall find scarce more of history in the whole tale following than in the foreword just concluded. The "manners and customs" also are rigidly suppressed. I have made bold, though, to use several of the colonists' names which have been preserved, but the conception of character is my own.

W. F. P.

Book 1

John Vytal

A Tale of the Lost Colony

CHAPTER I

"... framed of finer mould than common men."
—MARLOWE, in *The Jew of Malta.*

IT is not to yesterday that we would take you now, but to a day before innumerable yesterdays, across the dead sea of Time to a haven mutable yet immortal. For the Elizabethan era is essentially of the quick, although its dead have lain entombed for centuries. The world of that renascent period, alight with the spontaneous fire of intellectual and passionate life, shines through the space of ages as though then, for the first time, it had been cast off from a pregnant sun.

Overcoming the remoteness of the epoch by an appreciation of this vivid reality, we pause at the outset near the great south gate of London Bridge as it stood three centuries ago.

On a certain April afternoon the massive stones and harsh outlines served to heighten by contrast the effect of lithe grace and nonchalance apparent in the figure of a young man, who, leaning lightly against the barbacan, presented a memorable

picture of idleness and ease. Yet a fleeting expression in the youthful face belied the indolence of attitude. For in more ways than one "Kind Kyt Marlowe" resembled the spring-tide, whose tokens of approach he intuitively recognized. His eyes, usually soft and slumberous with the light of dreams, now and again shone brilliant like black diamonds. With all his careless incontinence, he possessed a latent power, a deep, indeterminable force, portending broad hot days and nights of storm.

His face, mobile dark and passionate, showed an almost alarming intensity. His brow, lofty but not massive, was surmounted by silken hair so black as to appear almost purple in the sunlight. He wore no beard, a small mustache adding to the refinement of his features, save for the fulness of his lips, which it could not hide. Taken as a whole, his face was the face of a man who had no common destiny; of a man who would drain the cup and leave no dregs, be the draught life-elixir or poison; of a man, in short, who might all but transcend his humanity by the fulness of life within him, or be suffocated and overwhelmed by the very superabundance of that life. For there are some seeming to be born with a double share of vitality, a portion far greater than was meant for man; and when this vitality, maturing, begins its re-creation, threatening all feebler forms with a new revolutionary condition, then the error is apparently discovered and the entire share of life recalled.

Christopher Marlowe was one of these men, but as he leaned against the Southwark Gate, that afternoon in early life, looking up the High Street through the gathering dusk, his eyes showed little more than the cheerful glow of a wood-fire, the mere hint of an unrestrainable flame underlying their expression.

Soon, however, the poet's reverie was broken. The afternoon's bear-baiting being over, and Southwark's amphitheatre empty of its throngs, a number of the earliest to leave were now upon the High Street, known then as Long Southwark. Seeing them approaching him on their way to London, Marlowe turned and walked in the same direction.

At the sign of "The Three Bibles" books and broadsides were for sale. It was this small, antiquated den on London Bridge that the author sought with the unconscious step of one who follows a familiar way.

He had but just entered the low-studded, gloomy shop, and greeted Paul Merfin, its owner, when the scabbard of a sword clanked on the threshold, and a man of great stature, accoutred as a soldier, darkened the doorway. With no prelude of salutation, the new-comer demanded of Merfin, in a voice of anxiety, "Tell me, hast seen—?" Then for the first time he became aware of Marlowe's presence, and, lowering his heavy tones to a whisper, finished his query in the bookseller's ear.

"Nay," was Merfin's answer, "I have seen nothing of him."

The soldier's face grew yet more uneasy. "Ill fortune!" he exclaimed; "it is always so," and he would have left the shop had not Marlowe detained him.

"Stay," said the poet, "I could not but hear your question, for your whisper, sir, being no gentler than a March wind, nips the ear whether we will or no. So you, I take it, are that giant, Hugh Rouse, who follows the Wolf. Of you twain I have heard much, and wondered if the tales from the South were true that told of so great a courage. I have seen the man, show me now the master."

"Would, sir, that I could, but I know not where the master is. And who, may I ask, are you, that show so deep an interest?"

"Not one to be feared," returned Marlowe, smiling; "an idle poet who has sung of braver men than his eyes have yet beheld, and would see a man still braver than the song—Kyt Marlowe, at your service, good my Rouse," and so saying, the poet, with a hand through the big soldier's arm, led the way from the shop out to the High Street of Southwark. "Had you not another comrade in the wars, a vagabond of most preposterous paunch and waddling legs? I have heard that he, too, follows milord, the Wolf."

"There is such an one," said Rouse, "but, alack! he also is missing. I pray you, though, call not our leader 'Wolf' again; none save fools and his enemies so name him."

"But I have heard that he is ferocious as a wolf, lean and very gray. The sobriquet is not ill-fitting."

"Nay," said the soldier, "in truth it fits most aptly in description of his looks, for though he is but five-and-thirty, his head and beard are grizzled, that before were black as night."

"'Tis not strange," observed the poet, leading his new acquaintance toward a favorite hostelry; "campaigning in the South ages many a man before his time."

"Ay, but that is not all."

"What more, then?"

"It is briefly told," answered the soldier. "His father was sent by her Majesty, our queen, with messages to Henry of Navarre, in whose army we two fought side by side. The envoy and his wife, who were passing through Paris—"

"What!" interrupted the poet, "were *they* his parents? I had forgot the story. It was the night

when Papists murdered Huguenots, the night of St. Bartholomew. An Englishman and his wife were slain ere their son, who had come from the South to warn them, could intervene. He saw his mother struck down, saw the sword and the bared breast in the glare of a dozen torches, and saw his father killed, too, after a brief struggle. Then the youth, who had cut his way nearer to the scene, found himself beset on all sides by a bristling thicket of steel that no man could divide. He fell. The Catholics laughed and left him for dead across the bodies of his parents. But the lad was not so easily undone. He rose, despite a wound beneath the heart, and, dripping blood, carried the two dead forms to the Seine, where, in the shadow of the Pont Neuf, he weighted his burdens with stones and buried them beyond the reach of desecration. The tale came to me as come so many legends of the wars from nameless narrators. That youth, then, is—"

"John Vytal," concluded the soldier, gravely. "He had fought before then at Jarnac and Moncontour; but now he warred against the Catholics with redoubled fury. 'Twas through him, I tell you, came the victorious peace of Beaulieu and Bergerac, and the fall of Cahors."

"Find me this man!" The words burst from the young poet in a voice of eager, impetuous command. "I must see him!"

"He was to have been at the 'Tabard' two hours since," returned the soldier, despondently, "but came not."

"Then let us return thither and wait for him a year, if need be. He will come at last, 'tis sure."

The narrow way on the bridge near by was now choked with its evening throngs, and, as daylight began to fade, a babble of many tongues rose

and fell in the streets of Southwark, with which the creaking song of tavern signs, aswing in the evening breeze, blent an invitation to innumerable stragglers from the bear-fight.

"Eh, now," said Rouse to one of these who joined him, "do you honor the 'Spurre,' Tom Watkins, or the 'King's Head'?"

"Nay, neither, Hugh; they lack that mustiness and age which make the inn. For this there's none like the 'Tabard,' that being a most ancient hostel. D'ye know what 'Tabard' is?"

"Nay, poorly; some kind o' garment, I've heard."

"It is, Hugh; a jacket with no sleeves, slit down from the armpits and winged on the shoulders. Thou'lt see it on the tavern sign. Only the heralds wear the things to-day, and call 'em coats-of-arms in service. Now, d'ye see, it's meet that I, a breeches-maker, should mind me of other attire as well, and not go breast-bare about the town. So, Hugh Rouse, I make my breeches by day, and I put on my tabard by night, thank the Lord, and I'm a well-arrayed coxcomb, ye'll allow. But here we are; get you in."

The speaker, a thin fellow of middle age and height, laughed over this oft-repeated joke till his sallow face looked like a tangle of his own leathern thongs, showing all its premature wrinkles, and his bent shoulders shook convulsively; yet there was no sound in the laughter save a kind of whispered crackle like the tearing of stiff paper.

On entering the inn, Marlowe and the soldier sought an obscure corner, but Thomas Watkins, the breeches-maker, being a character of no small popularity among the worthies of the borough, and one who had the commiseration of many, for good and sufficient reasons, seeing the tap-room already well filled, remarked thereon to the host, after his usual

manner of forced joviality. "How now, have I allowed myself to be forestalled and beaten in our race from the gardens to your spigot?" He surveyed the tables, with their dice-boxes, cards, and foaming cups, feigning an astonished air. Several of the guests looked up at him, laughing, with a certain indulgent, almost pitying, amusement. Simon Groat, the tavern-keeper, smiled, too, in fat good-humor.

"'Tis not often so," he returned; "you know the saying, Thomas, that the breeches you make yourself are unusual easy for quick running to the tavern, and uncommon broad and thick in the seat, that you may sit on our ale-bench by the hour with small wear to them." The crowd laughed yet more heartily at this, though many had heard the same stock jest before. "But now, to tell truth, Tom, ye're the very first from the gardens." He lowered his voice. "These be soldiers, as you see. Some arrived at Portsmouth from the Low Countries last month, and already must sally forth again, most madly, methinks, on the perilous Virginia voyage."

The breeches-maker glanced about him for the first time with a close attention to the room's occupants. For the most part they were unknown to him, several wearing the unmistakable air of fighting men. But his scrutiny was suddenly interrupted by the entrance of others more familiar in appearance. Leading the new arrivals into the tap-room came a short, nervous man, very thin both of body and voice. As he saw Watkins, his face, which had been eager, showed disappointment. "Faugh!" he ejaculated, turning to Groat; "Tom's told you."

The host looked as surprised as a very bland, corpulent person can. "Nay, Peter, what's he told me?"

The expression of Peter Sharp, needle-maker by trade, news-monger by preference, grew eager again.

"That's like Tom," he declared. "Some observation concerning the ale-tap instead of a good story, I'll warrant." He turned to his fellow-guests, with the exception of those who had entered behind him. "Were none of ye there," he asked, "to see a most astounding bear-baiting?"

The soldiers looked up with interest from their games. Marlowe and Rouse in particular showed a keen attention to the speaker. "Alack!" whispered Rouse, "I knew he'd do it." But his companion, all ears for what was coming, made a cautious gesture commanding silence, and said nothing.

"This is how it happened," began the needle-maker, now sure of an attentive audience. "First, Old Sarcason—by Heaven, the gamest bear, as I thought, that ever entered ring!—came badly off. The wards must needs grab every dog's tail and pull it might and main to hold them back from killing him. But Harry Hunks gave better fight, and nearly hugged a mastiff pup to death. And Little Bess of Bromley, too—ye should have seen her punish Queen Elgifa, a noble slut in her day. I've rarely seen so great sport at public baiting; but Bruin and his wards were on their mettle. The French ambassador was there. At the end they had a new pastime in store for us. And here came the trouble. Leading a small brute—him they call King Lud—faith, little more than cub, but strong as iron and uncommon savage, being a son of Old Sarcason and Little Bess—out they come with him, and blind his eyes. Then, tying him fast to the post, they flog his hide, each with a leathern whip, till the blood runs.* Whereat down jumps from a seat near the ring a man we knew not, tall and

* Incredible as it may seem, this despicable deed of cruelty has been authentically recorded by writers of the time.

travel-stained, and says that they should stop their 'wanton sport.' And following him into the ring jumps a clownish fellow of low stature and round paunch, like a stage jester in appearance. They both carried arms, the first a rapier, the mountebank a broadsword half his own length. We thought, then, it was all arranged, some new-conceived buffoonery to finish the baiting. Quick as can be, the two, with drawn swords, went forward and untied the bear, about whose back a lash still whistled. 'Tie him up,' says the tall man, pointing to one of the floggers. And suddenly 'twas done before we knew it. There stood Sir Knight of the Whip tied to the post in place of King Lud, and writhing most horribly, while the pot-bellied little clown danced about him, plying the self-same lash for dear life. In the mean time the other—of high station, I take it, despite his weather-worn garb—calmly unblinds the bear and turns him toward the sight at the whipping-post. The wards stood speechless, for Master Long-man held his rapier ready, and a pistol stuck out at his belt."

The needle-maker paused for breath, and, having a certain dramatic instinct, called for a flagon of ale, in order to postpone his climax. The other inmates of the tavern now listened to the nervous little story-teller with keen interest and some excitement. The pair in a corner waited breathlessly for the end. From time to time as the narrative had proceeded the bigger of the two could scarcely suppress his agitation, but, being restrained by Marlowe, he managed to voice the alarm he felt by no more than some occasional smothered ejaculation, such as, "I knew he'd do it!" or, "In troth, he was ever thus!"

"But the most astonishing incident is yet to come," resumed Peter Sharp, wiping the ale-foam from his lips. "No sooner did King Lud see what was going

forward than along he shambled slowly toward the clownish fellow, and, standing up on his hind legs, put a great paw on each of the little man's shoulders, and looked at him in a most friendly way as dogs do. Whereat the mountebank dropped his whip and spoke to his superior officer, as I took the other to be. Then Sir Soldier, drawing out a fat purse and turning to the Master of the Sports, who was even now coming into the ring in great dismay, nodded and delivered the purse into his hands. At that the stout retainer made a comical bow to all the people around the ring, as who should say, 'I hope we have amused you,' and, leading King Lud by his chain, calmly walked out of the arena. From this we felt all the more sure that it had been part of the performance. But I could not believe that the angry and amazed looks of him who had been flogged in Bruin's place, and of the wards, were feigned. Moreover, when the tall man left, he says to us all: 'Call ye yourselves men and watch such sports as these? Get ye to your kennels with the other dogs.' Whereupon he, too, walked from the ring slowly. It was all done with such despatch by him, and such a ready wit by his servant, that they befooled us utterly. Thinking it a comicality, no man in all the audience took action, and the few below us in the ring, being so terrified and bewildered by the sudden remonstrance and show of arms, stood dumfounded. But even then, I think, they might have regained their senses in time to send the twain to jail had not the Master of the Sports advised against pursuit, being, as I believe, well requited for King Lud and not unfamiliar with his purchaser."

The needle-maker raised his cup and drank deep, while a buzz of conversation began about him. A look of unspeakable relief had come to the faces of the soldier and the poet in the corner.

Toward this pair the eyes of a group across the room were frequently directed. Among the latter company one figure was particularly noticeable, being that of a very young man, of medium size, bearing himself not ungracefully, and wearing a riding-cloak thrown off over one shoulder above an inconspicuous doublet of dark red satin, which, together with his silken hose and velvet, befeathered hat, revealed the civilian. The man nearest to him, many years his senior, was, by name, Sir Walter St. Magil; by profession, unmistakably a soldier. He, too, was of medium height and aristocratic carriage, though with a face rendered exceedingly ill-appearing by a cast in one of his eyes which drew the pupil so far in toward the nose as to leave but a half of it visible.

As the needle-maker concluded his tale this man smiled knowingly, and the smile had more of meaning in it than of mirth or pleasantness. "There is but one," he said, that all might hear him—"but one with a brain so addled as to be capable of such folly. And that man, my masters, is none other than John—"

But the sentence died on his tongue, half spoken. For Hugh Rouse, who until now had taken no part in the general conversation, came forward from his corner like a great mastiff from its kennel.

"Nay, Sir Walter," he objected, "I pray you make no mention of the man's name; it will do no good."

For an instant the other's brow clouded, but, controlling himself with ease, he returned, suavely: "Oh, an you, as the man's friend, desire it, I keep silence. Ne'er-the-less, fool, I call him, name or no name, thus to interrupt a bear-baiting."

Little satisfied with this forbearance, Hugh, whose honest face had been for the moment almost threat-

ening, reluctantly resumed his seat in the corner near Marlowe. "Ah, Hugh Rouse," observed the latter, in an undertone, "your name neatly fits its owner. But you did well."

In the mean time, Sir Walter St. Magil, whose remarks had been so unceremoniously interrupted by Rouse, was talking in a low voice with his young companion. "The man," he said, so low that none but the immediate listener could hear him, "is Vytal —John Vytal. We've fought together in the Low Countries, but—" and here his voice sank to a whisper, while he glanced furtively about him, "he's not one of *our* men."

"Nay, I supposed not," rejoined the young man, in a careless voice, contrasting strongly with his elder's caution; "therefore, why consult this fellow's pleasure?"

"Because we might but stir up mischief by opposing the brawling giant. Well I know him, for he is Vytal's follower. As I live, the man has but few friends, yet those few would die for him."

"Some day the opportunity may be theirs," observed the other, smiling almost boyishly.

"Yes," assented St. Magil, in a grimmer tone, "but now we must have patience. For the moment let us guard Vytal's name as carefully as we conceal your own. Which reminds me—I'd almost forgot—what name dost go by now?"

"'Tis 'Frazer'; but give heed! That tale of bear-flogging has set these louts at odds."

He spoke truth, for Peter Sharp, the needle-maker, now not over-steady, thanks to the never-idle tapster, was indulging in an argument with Watkins, the breeches-maker, concerning his favorite entertainment. Entering with them into the discussion, though with less volubility and heat, were Samuel Gorm, a

bear-ward, and Alleyn, a young actor of plays and interludes. It was not, however, until Peter expressed the astonishing opinion that "none save a fool would enter a play-house, whereas, every man worthy of the name was at one time or another to be seen in the Paris Gardens," that Hugh Rouse rushed into the argument in his customary reckless manner.

"Hast been," he asked, vehemently, "to the 'Curten' and seen Master Alleyn, here, go through his acting? 'Sdein! The smell of powder, the sight of a musketoon, the glisten of pikes—and what not?—oh, they befool me finely!" The soldier turned to Marlowe, his broad face red with enthusiasm to the roots of his flaxen hair. "It befools me finely," he repeated. "I remember real rage and blows. Hand goes to hilt instinctively. Now, in this new invention writ by you, Master Marlowe, there is good cause for excitation." He paused, and, draining his cup, glanced at the actor. "I' faith, Alleyn, when you trod on Bajazeth's neck to mount his throne, I stood there, too. When you caged the caitiff, I baited him betwixt the bars. When ye fought with him, I cried, 'Couragio! Bravo! Tamburlaine! Well thrust!' and when you conquered, 'Thank God!' says I, ''twas most brave work. There's no blade in Spain or England can send a knave so quick to hell.' And that was but a play called 'Tamburlaine,' Master Alleyn, all conceived by Marlowe and thee—a pen and a sword together."

Hearing Rouse thus expatiate on the wonders of the drama, the youthful civilian, then known as Frazer, seemed to catch the somewhat turbulent manner of the soldier, and retorted with a sneer of mingled patronage and amusement: "Ay, my good Pike-trailer, *you* may be thus easily gulled, being of so hot a nature, but we, the less fiery, see through the play-actor's

pretensions." To this Rouse made no response, having, in truth, an unready wit, and a tongue that, as he occasionally realized, was quick enough to embroil him in controversy, but slow to rescue him therefrom with the preservation of an honorable peace. Marlowe, on the other hand, was naturally far less clumsy in wordy wars, and stood willing to espouse his new friend's cause in an argument which he, as playwright, was so well fitted to maintain.

"How now," said he to Frazer, "would not a soldier be the first to cry out against mere mimicry of that he holds most noble?"

"Indeed, Master Poet," returned Frazer, with an expression less haughty, but none the less amused, as he turned to his new opponent, "I know not, being unfamiliar with men-at-arms; yet I still maintain that the contest being real, as in a bear-fight, the excitement to the majority is greater. The play is but an imitation, and many actors, with all deference to you, Master Alleyn, no more than strutting mimics. I've seen stage kings, upon their exits from the inn-yards of their mighty conquests, go home as shambling hovellers. I've seen mock heroes, who erstwhile have trailed their pikes and rung their rowels to the tune of Spanish oaths, go white as death at sight of poniard drawn in earnest. But bear-baiting is real. The bear's a bear, the dog a dog. They know none other rôle than this—to fight to kill, and not for plaudits. Roar, growl, slobber, grasp of shaggy arms, clinch of naked teeth—by all the gods, these things are real! Here, Jack Tapster, another flagon to the bear!"

For a moment there was silence following the outburst of enthusiasm. This young Frazer had not a little dash of the reckless, roystering sort, causing the audience to forget his sinister companion, look-

ing on askance with that eye which lay half behind his nose as though in an effort to hide itself from those who might be capable of reading its real expression. The tap-room's occupants were strongly influenced by what they deemed an eloquent description of their favorite sport. But Marlowe was one of the few who saw deeper.

"Even so," said he, with a sudden outburst of young conceit. "There's more than battle in my 'Tamburlaine.' There's love, parentage, death in the play. Each day I feel most miserable when Zenocrate expires. A bear dies—that is but the death of a bear. Zenocrate's death is a queen's demise—a scene—a picture—call it what you will—'tis art, and in bear-baiting, I tell you, there is no art."

"Ay, Marlowe," observed Rouse, "excellent well said. I cannot find words as thou canst."

"Art!" exclaimed Frazer, "art! Is that a paint-brush in thy dainty scabbard, Sir Poet?" And again he laughed with a curiously boyish merriment.

"Ay," returned Marlowe, "and its crimson color grows dim. The paint-brush would fain find a palette to mix on and daub afresh, Master Princox."

"A *palate!*" ejaculated Frazer, laughing with genuine mirth; "that sheath must hold an axe then. It's by the palate wine goes to the stomach, and an axe, so I've heard, to the block."

"Ha, but thy wit," rejoined Marlowe, "'wol out,' as Geoffrey Chaucer said. Nay, though, perhaps it is because you watch fearfully the doings near block and gallows that you know so well their manners. Wit—foh! It is easy to play the game of words as Tarlton does. I call it but juggling phrases, and robbing language of its meaning, as a vagabond juggles stolen coin."

"Ay, juggles phrases," echoed Rouse, with admiration.

"But we'll see a nobler conjury," pursued Marlowe, upon whose hot blood the insolent bearing of Frazer was having its effect. "The artist's brush shall paint the juggler's tongue a deeper red—the—" The poet's threat, however, uttered while he rose and drew his sword, was interrupted by Simon Groat, the host, who came forward with hands uplifted in expostulation.

"Gogsnouns!" he exclaimed. "Not so, my worshipful guests. Take ye the 'Tabard' for a tilt-yard? Nay, nay—I pray you—here, tapster, a quietus for all—open the ale-tap wide. Free flagons, gentles, an it please you to wait and drain them. You'll find more space without—down by the bridge-house there is room for—"

And now Sir Walter St. Magil, the apparent adviser of young Frazer, lent his aid to Simon Groat in calming the turbulent disputants. "Ay, Master Frazer," said he, "respect thine host—the quarrel's idle, gentlemen, if you'll permit me."

"But the swords," declared Marlowe, "shall not be."

"Nay," cried Frazer, in whose veins the Canary wine ran riotous. "Your artist's brush would fain paint—"

"Fool!" roared Rouse, "you'll pay high for the picture," and so saying the big fellow pushed aside tables and chairs, while Marlowe stood on guard with rapier drawn. But at this instant, in a window behind Frazer, yet plainly visible to Rouse and Marlowe, the face of a man appeared.

"Fools all!" he said, in a voice that clipped words and shot them from him like bullets. "Sots! Ye're the bears! Why this babble of plays, when you only

enact a bear-baiting yourselves, and that poorly? 'Twere nobler to be a bear or bull-dog than an ass." Whereat, as suddenly as it had come, the face of the speaker disappeared from the tap-room window.

Marlowe and Rouse turned one to another in the silence of astonishment. And the name on the lips of both men, although they gave it not even a whispered utterance, was "Vytal."

CHAPTER II

"Our swords shall play the orator for us."
—MARLOWE, in *Tamburlaine.*

IT would be difficult adequately to describe the expressions of amazement, in face and gesture, of those who had had this fearless effrontery thrown at them. Its effect on Marlowe and Rouse was instantaneous. Both went back immediately to the table they had quitted, refraining from any further show of fight. The youth called Frazer was the first to speak.

"Who's the insolent fellow?"

"If I should fetch him," observed St. Magil, as no answer was forthcoming, "you would see a most extraordinary man." He went to the window. "Nay, he's gone. 'Tis always thus—up and down from hell's mouth like the devil in the play. But I can describe that face as though even now it was here before me, and, mark you, I saw it not when its mouth defied us at the window. He is well called the Wolf."

"Nay," interposed the poet, "save because many fear him. I drink to the man!" and Marlowe turned to Rouse.

"To the man I follow!" said the good Hugh, simply; and they drank. But the cups of Frazer and St. Magil for once stood untouched upon the table.

Before the conversation had gone further the tap-room door opened, admitting a short, stout woman of

middle age and rubicund visage. Glancing quickly about from one to another, her eyes at length rested on Thomas Watkins, who, having had his usually prominent place in the tavern gossip usurped by those of higher degree, and holding no small measure of ale within him, sat fast asleep and snoring. The sight of the breeches-maker in this position so enraged the new-comer that she awoke him by the startling method of boxing his ears soundly, and commanding him to follow her without delay. With a pained air, yet much alacrity, the poor leather-seller obeyed his orders. It was, indeed, his life-long obedience to his wife's decrees that won him the pity of his fellow-men.

"There's a customer at the shop, Tom Sot," declared the shrew, leading her husband to the bridge, "who wants you. And lucky we are if he be honest, for I must needs leave him there to guard it while I come here and get you. But Sloth's your name, and always will be. Had ever woman such a lazy clod to depend on?"

Thus she railed at the now miserable Watkins until they came to their shop at the sign of "The Roebuck," on London Bridge. Finding it empty, the breeches-maker, with much alarm, looked up and down the street through the gathering darkness. The narrow way on the bridge was almost deserted save for a watchman slowly approaching from the London end with horn-sided lanthorn, and halberd in hand, who cried out monotonously his song of the familiar burden:

> "Lanthorn and a whole candle-light!
> Hang out your lights! Hear!"

And just across the bridge stood another man near the parapet, his tall frame sharply defined against

the sky. It was to him that Watkins went in the hope of obtaining information concerning his departed customer.

"Can you tell me, sir, did any man just leave my shop at the sign of 'The Roebuck' there?"

"A man did," replied the stranger. "I am he."

"And you were left to guard it, sir, in Gammer Watkins's absence," complained the breeches-maker.

"I have guarded it. 'Twas but five minutes ago that I came out, and I've kept a close eye upon your doorway through every one of those five minutes. I tell you, Thomas, the time that has passed since I went out of your shop with a new pair of breeches is much longer."

The leather-seller looked up keenly into the speaker's face. "Salt and bread!" he exclaimed; "'tis Master Vytal!"

"Yes, Tom, or Captain Vytal, as you will, being now a fighting man from the Low Countries."

"Oh, sir, your presence brings me pleasure and consolation, I may say. How the times have changed in these few years—within, sir, and without! Have you heard about Queen Mary, how we have been delivered from her plots these two months past in a very, I may say, forcible way? Have you heard—?"

"Ay, Tom, all that, and more, too, on the road from the coast. But one thing I have not heard—how long will it take you to make me a pair of breeches?"

"But a short time, *Captain* Vytal. I was ever handy and quick with work for you."

"And so, Tom, I have come back to you."

"Ay, sir, but, alack!—the old days cannot come back. There are many, many changes since the good old times. The world, it seems to me, grows *petty*."

"What! call you it petty when a queen comes to the block?"

"Nay, but look you, Captain Vytal." He pointed to the top of the Southwark Gate. "See those heads spiked above us. They be thirty in number, yet all are but the pates of seminary priests who have entered England against the statute. Now this old bridge has had much nobler heads upon it, crowning the traitor's gate. The head of Sir William Wallace looked down on the river long ago, and later the Earl of Northumberland's. Some I have seen—Sir Thomas More's, the Bishop of Rochester's—"

"By Heaven!" broke in Vytal, "you are in no pleasant mood, Tom, on seeing me."

"'Tis not you, captain. 'Tis"—his voice sank lower—"she," and he pointed toward his shop. "Have you a wife yourself?"

"Nay, Tom, nor never shall have."

"'Tis well. The thousand new statutes that are imposed upon us by her Majesty, the queen—God preserve her!—since you left, are not one whit so hard to bear as them her majesty—God preserve *me!*—Gammer Watkins, imposes."

"There are two sides to every difference, Tom. Now, a little less at the 'Tabard'—but tell me, do the citizens grow uneasy beneath these numerous decrees?"

"Nay; many are but slight annoyances seldom put in force. The wearing of a rapier longer than three feet is forbidden *by law;* the wearing of a woman's ruff too large is prohibited *by law.* And our caps should be of cheaper stuff than velvet *by law,* and we must not blow upon horns or whistles in the streets *by law*—'uds precious, there is no end to it. But there is no statute against the flogging of blinded bears, captain—I had almost forgot this after-

noon's exploit of thine. I saw it not, for when they had brought King Lud to such a pass I could not sit there, but went to the bear-house in the garden to show a country lad Old Sarcason at closer quarters. Yet I might have known it was you when Peter Sharp described the adventure."

Vytal laughed. "I'm sorry you so soon forgot. I meant the thing to be a lasting lesson. But come, I want a pair of breeches. I go again abroad, but westward now, to the new country."

They walked across to the shop. "I fear," said Watkins, his voice sinking to a whisper, "you should not tarry long. Those bear-wards will not readily forgive you."

"Now, Thomas, what has that to do with breeches?"

"Nothing, indeed," returned the leather-seller, with a dry, crisp laugh. "Oh, but you never change, Master Vytal."

They were but just within the shop when the needle-maker came hurrying to the bridge excitedly, with young Frazer, Marlowe, Alleyn the actor, Gorm, and a dozen others at his heels, St. Magil slowly following in the rear.

"They seek the jackanapes who dared to curse them from the window," said Peter Sharp. "'Tis he, they say, that spoiled the bear-fight. His man, Rouse, hath started out in search, and they, being no more threatened by the giant, are bent on scouring the town. Oh, 'twill be brave sport to see the Wolf well harried." The needle-maker looked keenly at Watkins, behind whom Vytal, unknowingly, stood concealed by the shadows of the shop.

Watkins forced a laugh. "Ay, brave sport," said he; "but 'tis not to the town he's gone; he hath started out toward Lambeth."

"Toward Lambeth!" cried young Frazer, who by

now stood face to face with Watkins. "Ho, for Lambeth, then; but first let us stop and invite the bearwards thither. 'Tis in part their right to end the quarrel."

Here, perhaps, the danger would have been averted had not a new quarrel arisen of far more serious consequence, and, indeed, so fraught with import that, although but incidental, we recognize it as one of those contentions in which the very Fates themselves, seeming to join, brawl like shrews until their thread is snarled and the whole fabric of a human life becomes a hopeless tangle.

As Watkins closed the door of his shop, Sir Walter St. Magil turned back toward the 'Tabard' in ugly mood. The wine, which at first had exhilarated him, being now soured by his disapproval of Frazer's rashness, only added to his ill-humor. Young Frazer, on the other hand, who walked beside him, had grown merrier and even less cautious than before. Now that the Canary wine had fired his brain, other considerations were cast aside, all policy forgotten. The air of refinement and courtliness which, being so well assumed, had previously seemed genuine, left him suddenly. He became but an ill-bred roysterer, singing, as he started back, various catches of ribald songs, while Gorm, the bear-ward, arm-in-arm with Peter Sharp, followed not over-steadily, and several other tipplers, who, from their windows in the bridge houses, had seen the gathering before Watkins's leather-shop, hurried out to bring up the rear with a chorus of vulgar jesting.

At the Southwark Gate Peter Sharp, the needle-maker, who by now was leading the motley throng with an apish dance, having caught the spirit of hilarity, came to a stand-still and turned to the bear-ward, who was shambling after him as steadily as his

bandy legs and tipsy condition would allow. "'S bodikin!" he exclaimed. "Now tell me, jovial Bruin-baiter, didst ever see so remarkable a sight?" He pointed ahead of him to a young girl approaching the gateway on the High Street, escorted by a man who was evidently her servant. "Here's a wench with a ruff, indeed!"

The girl of whom he spoke was now within the scope of the light cast by a number of lanthorns the revellers were carrying. Seeing them, and hearing the needle-maker's rude observation, she hesitated timidly; then, bidding her servant follow her, turned toward a side street, with the evident intention of escaping insult by taking barge across the Thames from the nearest water-gate.

"A ruff that wears a wench, I should say," corrected Frazer.

"Yes, and by donning such extreme attire," declared the needle-maker, assuming an air of official importance, "she breaks the queen's decree. It is but the duty of all good citizens like myself to stop these outlandish practices. Do you detain her, Gorm, while I fetch shears and cut the thing as the law demands." Whereupon the mischievous Peter ran back quickly, and Gorm, with a coarse oath, staggered forward to intercept the girl.

"Yes, a ruff that wears a wench," repeated Frazer, evidently pleased with his own facetiousness.

"Let be," commanded St. Magil, and would have passed on but for his youthful comrade, who, pushing the bear-ward aside, laid hold on the girl's arm, and, taking a lanthorn from one of the by-standers, held it before her face. At this her servant drew his sword and rushed upon Frazer savagely. But a steady rapier-point, unseen in the dark, met him full in the breast, so that he fell forward

groaning, and the weapon was with difficulty withdrawn.

"Nay, now, Sir Walter," said Frazer, laughing as though nothing had happened, "this is no wench and ruff, but rather a flower, I should say, whose outer petals, drooping, form a collarette about its budding centre. It is, indeed, well to cut the petals. I shall keep them as a token;" and, leaning forward, he would have kissed the girl full upon the lips, but she stepped back quickly, with her face behind her upraised arm, and tried to elude his grasp. "Is there not *one* gentleman?" she cried; and then, in answer, a voice above all the laughter said, sharply, "Yes, one." It was Vytal. A few strides had brought him from the breeches-maker's shop to the gateway, only the lodge of the bridge porter standing between "The Roebuck" and Long Southwark.

The girl now stood immediately beneath the great stone arch of the gate, her eyes flashing in the lanthorn-light. For one instant Vytal looked at her, and the light fell on his face, too. "My God!" he whispered; "it is you, come to me at last!" But whatever expression his face wore then, it meant only one thing to the crowd who watched it, particularly to the bear-ward, who had been suddenly sobered by the adventure, and to the needle-maker, who had returned, long shears in hand.

"'Tis the very knave we seek!" exclaimed the two, in a voice of astonishment. "Yes," added Gorm, "and now for the reckoning." So saying, he ran heavily away toward the river and along its bank to the Paris Garden.

"Ay, 'fore Gad!" ejaculated Frazer; "but there are other debts to pay."

"One moment," said the soldier; whereupon, leading the girl by the hand, he took her back to Wat-

kins's leather-shop, and without another word ushered her across the threshold. Standing then before the doorway by which she had entered, Vytal drew his rapier, while Frazer, throwing his riding-cloak to St. Magil, who saw with annoyance that a grave quarrel was now inevitable, came forward, with ease and grace regained, for the fracas had sobered him, too, and sober, he appeared, as we have said, a gentleman. His peculiarly boyish and almost innocent face, with its beardless chin and compressed lips, showed valor and determination, to which the ever-amused, patronizing look of his eyes added a certain bantering expression.

The crowd, whose numbers were steadily increasing, stood concentrated to one side near the Southwark Gate, giving the combatants as wide a berth as the bridge afforded between its double file of buildings. St. Magil held the on-lookers back, his own rapier drawn in case of interference. But at present there seemed to be small chance of this, for Hugh Rouse was beyond ear-shot, and Watkins, who alone in the crowd espoused the captain's cause, could do naught but argue his case in the deaf ears of the by-standers. The leather-seller's sallow face grew paler, for although he had no doubts as to the ability of Vytal's sword-arm, he had seen the hasty departure of Gorm, and knew its meaning. Unfortunately Alleyn, who might have been of assistance in case of need, had left at the first signs of bad blood, being a peaceable man by nature. We should mention, however, in addition to Watkins, as exceptions to the general ill-feeling, two men who watched the scene with a partial interest. These were Merfin, the book-seller, and Marlowe, who stood across the street under the sign of "The Three Bibles." The young poet was looking at Vytal with eyes aflame, for sud-

denly the great martial heroism of his dramas had become corporate and vivid in this man. It did not occur to him to interfere, as, breathless, he watched the fight. The conclusion of the contest was foregone in his mind, and only the dramatic element intensely absorbing.

"Now, *couragio!* my brave world-reformer!" cried Frazer. "I will show you that civilians are not all dullards at the art of fence. But before we cross I'd have you remember that I could send you before a justice an I would. There's a statute against ruffs that are too big, and, in troth, still another against rapiers over-long. Now yours, Master Vytal, is one of these."

At this the excited Peter Sharp, who must needs have his say when the occasion offered, cried out from his position in the front rank of the audience: "Nay, 'tis a mere bodkin, and I should know, being needle-maker; but you will prove it, I doubt not."

"Dolt!" rejoined Frazer, turning to Peter and the rest, "I meant that not so literally. Mark you, all rapiers are too long, an they play against the queen's decrees, be they bodkins or the length of quarter-staffs." And, looking at St. Magil, he smiled.

"Now, meddler," resumed Frazer, turning back to Vytal, who maintained his guard in silence, "I'll teach you the *stoccata*, as 'tis done before the queen. The *stoccata*—'tis thus!" Whereat the youth, with a quick wrist, thrust skilfully. But his blade was parried with apparent ease. "'Slid!" he exclaimed, betraying himself yet more the braggart, as he realized the dexterity of Vytal, nevertheless a brave braggart, which is an uncommon combination. "Body o' Cæsar! but you know the special rules! Now this, for instance, the *imbroccata*," and he thrust

again more viciously in tierce. For several minutes the rapiers crossed and recrossed, quick, slender gleams dancing in the lanthorn-light. "And this, the *punto*," said Frazer, still persisting in his rôle of master, while Vytal, more than ten years his senior, spoke no word, but only fenced and fenced, controlling the other's point and awaiting an opening. "And the *reverso*—there—there—there again, and the *passada*—thus—'Slud! the bodkin stitches quickly—the tool's full of tricks—God! I'm undone—"

But no, for at this instant the rapier of St. Magil came darting forward like a snake to parry the thrust from his friend's breast, and now it was two, side by side, against the one who held the doorway. The crowd stood breathless, spellbound. Never had they seen such play of weapons.

Vytal drew a dagger with his left hand; his antagonists instantly responded. But he was willing to risk that, considering the increase of his own advantage greater than the addition to theirs. And now the rapiers played, with an under meaning, as it were, in the vicious poniards. Here was a contest between men who knew the art, and lived by it, and could live by naught else now but a successful practice of their knowledge. Up and down, to and fro, the rapiers made their way, now fast, now slower, like silver moon-rays on the river below, while hither and thither, prying about for an open spot, the flat poniards ran with far more venom though less grace.

And still Vytal held his ground, even gaining at the last, for St. Magil breathed heavily, and the youth beside him had gone white as death.

But it was then that several new-comers, led by Gorm, the bear-ward, entered the bridge street by the Southwark Gate. Having broadswords ready drawn and curses on their lips for Vytal, their in-

tention was evident. One the people recognized as him who had been flogged instead of the blinded bear he had been flogging. Their onrush against the soldier, however, was delayed for an instant by the sight of the furious fight before them. On seeing them, Vytal's face grew graver. "Curs!" he muttered, and then, in a voice just loud enough to rise above the clash of steel, "Watkins, seek Rouse!—the 'Tabard!'"

At this, the breeches-maker, upbraiding himself for his demented negligence, strove to break through the throng, but could not. In despair, he groaned aloud. Just then, however, Vytal found Frazer's hilt with his rapier-point, and, maintaining his guard for the instant with dagger alone, threw the weapon high in air, and across the street, where it fell, ringing, at the feet of Christopher Marlowe. And Vytal's voice rose above the clamor of invective in a short, sharp cry: "Hugh! Roger! To me!" For the bear-wards from the garden were now opposing his rapier with their heavy blades. Yet he still held the door, rendering entrance to the breeches-maker's shop and to the girl within it as difficult as ever. He heard a voice from across the threshold imploring him to save himself, if he could, by leaving the shop-door—and that low voice, coming to him from behind the barrier, then again from an upper window, where the girl watched with wonder his gallant defence of her, only nerved his arm to the more strenuous endeavor.

We have said that the rapier of which Vytal had deprived Frazer fell at the feet of Marlowe. It came like an invitation to him—almost a command. Similarly inspiration had come more than once to fire his genius and kindle the flame that irradiated his poetry, but here for the first time inspiration shone to show

him another outlet for his ardor; the lustre of mere portrayal paled before the forked lightning of those swords at work, while his thoughts, at first suggesting some future depiction of the scene, gave way to hot impulse. His blood ran riotously in his veins, and as he leaped forward to Vytal's side with Frazer's rapier ready, all his art was the art of fence, all his spirit the spirit of action.

But his opportune aid, though immediately appreciable in holding back the soldier's assailants, was soon diverted by the latter to another course.

"Quick!" said Vytal, in a low voice. "Go you in by the door behind us. Up—" his words came disjointedly, being broken by some extra-hazardous thrust or parry demanding unusual attention—"up, there—through the shop—ah, they almost had you—control his point another minute—take her with you through the porter's lodge—it can be done—quick!—and then whither she will—to some place—of safety—but remember the place—meet me at the 'Tabard' later."

"Meet you!" ejaculated Marlowe, still with eyes on every movement of the adversaries. "No man could hold out singly—against—this army. I came to save your life—not for some intrigue."

"An you call it that," returned Vytal, who was now pressed closer than ever by St. Magil, Frazer, and the cursing bear-wards, "'twere better—to fight against me! Could you defend the door, I'd go myself—quick!—the game fails us— Save her—'tis what I fight for—see—ah, they have us; we're lost an you tarry longer—quick—quick, into the shop—" and with that, Vytal, assuming a more aggressive method than hitherto, so drove back his opponents, by the sheer determination and boldness of his attack, that Marlowe, finding space to retreat, and being

persuaded by the other's vehemence, pushed the shop-door open behind him, and, with his rapier still in play, stepped back across the threshold. Once within the shop he closed the door, to which Vytal fell back again slowly, and, maintaining his old position, made further ingress for the moment impossible.

But the odds were now almost hopelessly against the soldier. Frazer had borrowed a broadsword, and, together with St. Magil and three of the bear-wards, who out of six alone remained unwounded, sought to break through Vytal's wonderful defence. Fortunately only St. Magil and his companion were dexterous swordsmen. It was the numbers, not the skill, of his additional opponents that Vytal feared. But Frazer's broadsword, although somewhat unwieldy in an unaccustomed hand, by its mere weight had nearly outdone the light rapier opposing it. The soldier, therefore, sought to keep this heavy blade entirely on the defensive, realizing that if once Frazer were allowed to swing it freely it would doubtless strike through the cleverest rapier parry that could possibly seek to avert its downward cleavage.

Few contests have shown a shrewder scientific skill in fencing than Vytal now pitted against the superior force of his antagonists. Thrusting viciously at Frazer, he appeared to neglect his own guard, save where he opposed his poniard against St. Magil's rapier. By this feint he accomplished a well-conceived end, rendering Frazer's great sword merely a defensive weapon, and exposing his breast invitingly to the foremost of the unsuspecting bear-wards, who lunged toward the opening so recklessly as to neglect his own defence. In that instant Vytal's rapier, like lightning, turned aside from its feigned attack on Frazer and pierced the bear-ward's breast.

As the mortally wounded man fell back, momen-

tarily hindering the onslaught of his friends, the voice of Gammer Watkins reached Vytal from within the shop. "Fool!" she cried to him, "you fight for naught. The bird ha' flown already with another—ha, the coxcomb robs you of your game—"

But it was for this that Vytal waited. His plan concerning the girl's safety being now successfully executed, left him free to act entirely for himself. He saw the folly of attempting to hold out longer against so great odds, with no hope of an actual victory. His strength, although not yet seriously impaired, must inevitably sooner or later be exhausted, whereas his opponents could harbor their own by alternately falling back to rest and regain their breath while others in turn kept him occupied.

With this realization, Vytal set his back against the door, seeking to open it and enter the shop, but the latch held it against him. He dared not call to Gammer Watkins for fear of betraying his plan of escape to his adversaries, and so, to their amazement, with not a trace of warning he flung the poniard from his left hand into the face of St. Magil, and, darting that hand behind him, lifted the latch. Instantly he was within the shop, followed by Gorm, Frazer, and as many of the throng as could make their way with a headlong rush after him. They were now like hounds lusting for the blood of a stag at bay, excepting two among the foremost to enter, whether they would or not—namely, the terrified breeches-maker and the watchman, who, lanthorn in hand, had witnessed the contest with a gaping interest instead of seeking to end it as the law demanded.

From the shop's entrance straight to its rear wall ran a dark passage, at the end of which a window opened high above the Thames. Beside this passage a narrow stairway led to one or two upper chambers.

Mounting quickly to a step midway on the staircase, the breeches-maker was followed by many others, who, eager to gain view of so desperate a conflict and to see the final harrying of the prey, pulled one another down from the coveted vantage-point, trampling on the weaker ones that fell. The watchman, gathering up his long gown, had succeeded in arriving at the breeches-maker's side, thanks to his official superiority, and now, as he held his lanthorn out at arm's-length over the passage, the dim light through its horn screens fell upon Vytal and others in the hallway, who, headed by Gorm and Frazer, were pressing their game with redoubled fury. The staircase groaned and creaked beneath its trampling burden, the house seeming to echo the clash and whisper of steel, while now and again a bitter oath rang out above the varied clamor. For the rage of Vytal's enemies only increased as it became evident that the number of those capable of direct attack was necessarily limited by the narrow passage.

Thus he still remained unscathed.

Assuming again the defensive until he had fallen back to a spot immediately beneath the watchman's overhanging light, he suddenly struck upward with his rapier, and, knocking the lanthorn from its holder's grasp, brought to the shop utter darkness save for a glimmer of starlight that shone faintly through the rear window.

Then, after the first bewildering moment of gloom, when hoarse cries for lights drowned softer sounds, and the staircase voiced its strain with new groans under the stampede, and each swordsman mistook his neighbor for the enemy, with the result of blundering wounds in the black passage—after that moment of havoc there came a lull, a loud volley of oaths, and the breeches-maker's laugh was heard crackling

like dry wood amid the roar of an angry flame. For one instant even the patch of sky framed by the casement was obscured, and those looking toward the window saw it filled by a dark form that came and went as a cloud across the moon.

Vytal, having gained the sill, had leaped far out into the Thames.

Book 11

CHAPTER I

"What star shines yonder in the east?
The loadstar of my life."
—MARLOWE, in *The Jew of Malta.*

" THE 8th we weighed anchor at Plymouth, and departed thence for Virginia."

With this terse statement of fact an old-time traveller is content to record the beginning of a memorable voyage.

It was on the 8th of May, 1587, that two ships —one known as the *Admiral,* of a hundred and twenty tons, the other a fly-boat—set sail westward from the coast of England. There was also a pinnace of small burden carried on board the larger vessel, and ready to be manned for the navigation of shallow waters; but this, like a child in arms, was a thing of promise rather than present ability.

The aim of the voyage is briefly outlined: to establish an English colony in Virginia, where previous attempts at settlement had resulted in desertion and no success; to find fifteen men who had been left the year before to hold the territory for England; to plant crops; to produce and manufacture commodities for export; to extend commerce and dominions; to demand the lion's share between possessions of France and Spain—the great central portion of a continent; and thus in all ways first and last to uphold the supremacy and majesty of England and the queen.

The ships had been provisioned at Portsmouth and Cowes, where many of the colonists embarked, including among the notable ones two Indians, Manteo and Towaye by name, who, several years before, had been brought to England from Roanoke by Arthur Barlow. At Portsmouth, among others, three soldiers came aboard, booted and spurred as though from a recent journey in the saddle; the one slim, tall, and bronzed by the sun; another no shorter, but broad and heavy in proportion; the third laughable in aspect, being fat, as if, like a stage buffoon, he had stuffed a pillow in his doublet, and leading, much to the astonishment of the passengers, a bear-cub that copied his own waddling gait, and followed on a chain of bondage with remarkable fidelity.

In the evening one of these soldiers stood alone on the *Admiral's* high stern, a motionless figure, clean-cut against the sky. His eyes, blue like the deep sea, looked back toward the receding coast-line, fixed on the dissolving land with a resigned fatality and regret.

With the sun, westward, the two ships went down slowly over the horizon, leaving England a memory behind—a memory, yet very real, while the haven, far ahead, somewhere beneath the crimson sky, seemed but a dream that could not shape itself—a dream, a picture, bright, alluring, undetailed, like the golden painting of the sun. Tall and erect as a naked fir-tree the man stood on the top deck in the stern—still stood when night came and there was not even a melting horizon to hold his gaze—still stood as though to turn would be to wake forever from a vision beside which all things actual must seem unreal. But at last he turned resolutely and, drawing his cloak about him, glanced off toward the *darkening* west; then, with a word to one and an-

other as he passed his fellow-voyagers, he sought the ship's master to discuss plans for the maintenance and general welfare of the colony.

As he was about to enter the main cabin a soldier accosted him. "The die is cast, captain."

"Yes, Rouse; we have done well in starting. May ill fortune throw no better."

"Nay," observed the Saxon giant, in low tones. "But already I mistrust this Simon Ferdinando, the master of our ship."

"He is but a subordinate. We have the governor and his twelve assistants to depend on."

"Ay, captain, and you."

"I am one of the twelve."

"God be praised!" said Hugh, fervently. "But there's mischief in Simon. I always mislike these small men."

"You forget our Roger Prat, no higher than your belt; and yet, Hugh Rouse, even you have no greater fidelity."

"'Tis true, but his breadth is considerable. Cleave him in twain downward, as he's ofttimes said, then stand his paunch on the top of his head, and Roger Prat would be as tall as any of us. 'Tis merely the manner of measurement."

"In all things," said Vytal, with a fleeting smile, and wishing to see this Ferdinando, the *Admiral's* master, in order to judge of the man for himself, he entered the main cabin.

With Ferdinando he found John White, the governor appointed by Sir Walter Raleigh, at whose expense the voyage had been undertaken. The governor, whom Vytal had met but once before, was a man of medium stature and engaging personality. His expression, frank and open, promised well for sincere government, but his chin, only partly hidden

by a scant beard, lacked strong determination. Ferdinando, on the other hand, to whom Vytal was now introduced for the first time, so shifted his eyes while talking, much as a general moves an army's front to conceal the true position, that candor had no part in their expression; while his low forehead and close brows bespoke more cunning than ability. He was, moreover, undoubtedly of Latin blood; therefore, in the judgment of Englishmen, given rather to strategy than open courage. Nevertheless, his reputation as a navigator had not yet suffered. That he relied much on this was made evident by his first conversation with Vytal. In answer to the latter's questions concerning matters that bore directly on the management of the little fleet, Ferdinando replied, "Since Sir Walter Raleigh has wisely left the management to me, you need have no fear, I assure you, regarding your welfare."

"What, then," asked Vytal, "if you object not to the inquiry of one who studies that he may duly practise, what, then, are the main rules we observe?"

To this the master made no answer, but, with an air of indulgent patronage, handed Vytal several sheets of paper well filled with writing. The soldier glanced over them, and read among others the following orders: "That every evening the fly-boat come up and speak with the *Admiral*, at seven of the clock, or between that and eight; and shall receive the order of her course as Master Ferdinando shall direct. If to any man in the fleet there happen any mischance, they shall presently shoot off two pieces by day, and if it be by night two pieces and show two lights."

When Vytal had read these and many similar ar-

ticles he turned slowly to Ferdinando. "A careful system. Is it all from your own knowledge?"

"From whose else, think you?"

"I make no conjecture, but only ask if it be yours and yours alone."

"It is," replied Simon, and turning to John White, the governor, who had said little, he added, "Your assistant, worshipful sir, seemingly hath doubt of my word." White turned to Vytal questioningly.

"Nay," observed the soldier, "I would show no doubt whatever," and so saying he left the cabin.

Similar conversations followed on subsequent evenings, Ferdinando boasting much of his seamanship; and once the governor went out with Vytal from the room of state. "You mistrust our ship's master, Captain Vytal, although you would show it not on considering the expedience of harmony. Wherefore this lack of faith?"

"Because the orders and articles are framed exactly upon the plan of those issued by Frobisher in 1578, when he sought a northwest passage, and by Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1583, changed, of course, to suit our smaller fleet. The worthy Ferdinando has effected a wise combination; he has done well—and lied in doing it."

The governor looked up into Vytal's dark face for the first time, searchingly. "How came you to know?" he queried.

"I remember things."

"But where—"

"I forget other things," was Vytal's answer. "An you'll permit me I'll leave you. There's a man's face under that light"—he was walking toward it now alone—"a familiar face," he repeated to himself, and the next minute exclaimed in amazement, "'Tis the man who fought beside me on the bridge!"

"Ay," said the poet, smiling, "'tis Kyt Marlowe,* at your service in reality."

Vytal scrutinized him keenly, Christopher returning the gaze with a look of admiration that increased as his eyes fell once more on the so-called bodkin at the soldier's side. "You are readier with that implement than with your tongue," he observed, finally.

"The most important questions," returned Vytal, "are asked with an upraised eyebrow, an impatient eye." There was an abrupt cogency and gravity of manner about the soldier that sometimes piqued his fellows into an attempted show of indifference by levity and freedom of utterance. They made as though they would assert their independence and disavow an allegiance that was demanded only by the man's strong, compelling personality, and seldom or never by a word. He was masterful, and they, recognizing the silent mastery, must for pride's sake rebel before succumbing to its power. Marlowe, with all his admiration, born of the soldier's far-famed prowess and imperious will, proved no exception to this rule.

"I marvel," he observed, with a slight irony and daring banter, "that so dominant a nature is readily subject to the coercive beauty of women's faces. Even the Wolf's eyes may play the—"

"What?"

"The sheep's." It was a bold taunt, and the poet was surprised at his own effrontery. But like a child he saw the fire as a plaything.

"Explain." The word came from Vytal quietly and with no impatience.

* As there is absolutely no reliable record of Marlowe's personal life and dwelling-place at this time, I have felt justified in attributing his generally acknowledged absence from London to a Virginia voyage.

"Oh, there have been other beguiling faces, so I've heard. A tale is told—" he hesitated.

"Of whom?"

"Of you."

"What is it?"

"A tale vaguely hinting at a court *amour*. 'Tis said the queen would have knighted a certain captain for deeds of valor in the south; but at the moment of her promising the spurs, she found him all unheedful of her words, found him, in fact, with eyes gazing off entranced at a girlish face in the presence chamber, the face of her Majesty's youngest lady-in-waiting. To those who saw our Queen Elizabeth then and read her face, the issue was seemingly plainer than day, blacker than night.

"'Nay, Captain Vytal,' said the queen, her lip curling with that smile of hers which is silent destiny itself—'nay, she is not for you; nor yet is knighthood either. Our boons are not lightly thrown away, so lightly to be received.' And then, says the tale, she paused with a frown, to cast about for an alternative to the benefit she would, a moment before, have conferred most graciously. From her dark expression the courtiers supposed that ignominy would take the place of compliment in the soldier's cup. But at this instant her Majesty's favorite, Sir Walter Raleigh, 'Knight of the Cloak,' made bold to intervene on his friend's behalf. 'An I may venture,' he said, in a low voice, 'to argue the case before so unerring a judge, I would assert from my own experience that this man's first sudden sight of a divine radiance has dazzled and blinded him, so that perforce he must seek a lesser brilliancy to accustom his eyes to the perfect vision. The moth, despairing of a star, falls to the level of a candle.' Then her Majesty turned to Sir Walter with a chang-

ing, kinder look. And before she could glance again at the captain to seek for an acquiescence to the flattery (which, I believe, would have been sought in vain, for the soldier is said to be desperate true), before she could harbor a second resentful thought, the knight spoke again. 'There is an augury about this Captain Vytal,' he declared, 'a prophecy sung at his birth by a roving gypsy maid. "He shall be," said she, "*a queen's defender—the brother of a king.*" I pray your Majesty leave him free to prove the truth of this prediction. There is but one queen to whom it can refer, for there is one queen only under heaven worthy of the name. Of the king I know not, but it may be that the king, too, is our most gracious sovereign, Elizabeth, for while in beauty and grace she is a queen, in majesty and regal strength no monarch is more kingly. "*A queen's defender—the brother of a king.*" It has all the presumption of a prophet's words. For the latter condition is impossible; none can ever rise so high as to be honored by your Majesty with the name of brother'—Sir Walter's voice sank almost to a whisper—'indeed,' he added, daringly, 'none would choose the name. But—a queen's defender—that means more.'

"Her Majesty turned to the soldier. 'Would you be your queen's defender to the end?' she demanded, sternly, but now without menace in her voice.

"'To the death.'

"'Appoint him,' she said to Raleigh, 'where you will. The spurs are yet to be won by the defence.'"

Marlowe paused, his story finished. "And thus, you see," he added, as Vytal made no rejoinder, "I was right in saying that more than one fair face had hazarded your welfare."

"No, you were wrong."

The poet's dark eyes opened wide with a query,

but he said nothing in words, for the feeling of pique had already passed with his airy rebellion against the other's trenchant monosyllables.

"The face in court," avowed Vytal, as though half to himself, "and the face in the Southwark Gateway, belong to one and the same woman. I ask you outright wherefore you met me not at the 'Tabard Inn'? Whither went the maid?"

"Now there," replied Marlowe, his eyes cast down, "*I* must play the silent part. In truth, I know not."

"Know not?"

"Nay, for when we had come safely from the porter's lodge, she demanded that I should take her to a barge, that she might go thereby to London. We had no more than set foot within the boat, and I was questioning her as to the directions I should give the waterman, when another wherry came beside us, seemingly just arrived from across the river, and a man in that, scrutinizing us, slowly spoke to her. Then, thanking me, and bidding me thank you for that which she said was beyond all payment, she entered the wherry with the other, and was quickly conveyed toward London."

For several minutes Vytal was silent; then at last he asked, quietly, "Did the man call her by name?"

"By the name of Eleanor."

"And she said no more of me?"

"Yes, much, as we went toward the river; much concerning your gallantry; and from the barge wherein she sat, beside her new-found friend, she cried back to me that with all speed they would send you aid to the bridge. 'Tis evident the assistance came."

Vytal made no denial. The method of his escape was but a trifling detail of the past. He shrugged his shoulders. "'Tis well I strive not only for reward."

"Was it not reward," asked the poet, "to look once upon that face with the eye of a protector?"

"Yes," said Vytal.

"And to see her bosom heave gently to the rise and fall of the universal life-breath tide, which alone hath poetry's perfect motion, and to note its trouble in the rhythm as in the breast of a sleeping sea—was that not recompense?"

"Yes."

"And her eyes—the privilege to tell of them, to wonder vainly, and seek with all poetic fervor for words that hold their spirit—is it not invaluable reward?"

"Yes," said Vytal.

"They might well," declared the poet, "be the twin stars of a man's destiny."

"Yes," and the two men, standing amidships near the rail, looked at each other steadfastly, Marlowe at the last turning his gaze downward to the starlit water. It seemed to Vytal as though a spell held his eyes fixed on the poet's face, across which the lanthorn gleams fell uncertainly, intensifying a shadow that came not only from outward causes. And the spell possessing Vytal, portended some new condition—change—tidings—he could not tell what.

Suddenly Marlowe, as if by an impulse, caught his arm. "Vytal, she is there." He pointed to the light of the fly-boat far behind. "She came aboard at Plymouth with a slim, weak-seeming fellow whom I take to be her brother, for his name, like hers, is Dare—Ananias Dare, one of the governor's assistants. 'Twas he who met her at the bridge. Vytal, she is there."

The soldier followed his gaze. "There!" The word came in a vague tone of wonder, as from a sleeper at the gates of a dream; and with no comment,

no reproach, no question, Vytal went away to be alone.

For many minutes after he had gone, Marlowe stood looking into the shrouds, but at last, as though their shadows palled on his buoyant spirit, he wandered along the deck, singing to himself a song of genuine good cheer. And soon, to his delight, the notes of a musical instrument, coming from somewhere amidships, half accompanied his tune. Eagerly he sought the player, and came on a scene that pleased him. For there against the bulwark sat a stout vagabond cross-legged on the deck, strumming merrily on a cittern, as though rapidity of movement were the sole desire of his heart. The instrument, not unlike a lute, but wire-strung, and therefore more metallic in sound, rested somewhat awkwardly on his knee, for his stomach, being large, kept it from a natural position. The player's fat hand, nevertheless, with a plectrum between the thumb and forefinger, jigged across the strings, his round head keeping time the while and his pop-eyes rolling.

"'Tis beyond doubt that Roger Prat," said Marlowe to himself, "Vytal's vagabond follower, and avenger of King Lud, the bear."

Ranged around this striking figure were many forms, dark, uncertain, confused in outline, and above the forms faces—faces vaguely lighted by an overhanging lanthorn, and varied in expression, yet all rough, coarse, uncouthly jubilant with wine and song.

In the middle of this half-circle a woman sat predominant in effect. Her hair, riotous about her neck, shone like gold in the wavering gleam; her red lips were parted witchingly. She was singing low a popular catch, in which "heigh-ho," "sing hey," and "welladay," as frequent refrains, were the only intelligible phrases.

On seeing Marlowe she rose, even the refrains becoming inarticulate in the laughter of her greeting. "Why, 'tis Kyt!" she cried—"Kind Kyt, the poet!" whereat, much to the amusement of her admiring audience, she stepped lightly toward him and, throwing her head back, asked outright, "Saw you ever so comely a youth?" then, with a coquettish, bantering look at the cittern-player, "Good-night, Roger Prat, I'm going," and she led Marlowe away into the darkness.

"Gyll!" he exclaimed, "Gyll Croyden! Is't really thee? How camest thou to leave thy Bankside realm, thy conquest of rakes and gallants?"

She laughed anew at this and shrugged her shoulders. "How camest thou, Kyt Marlowe, to leave thy Blackfriars, and thy conquest of play-house folk, for the wild Virginia voyage?"

The poet laughed as carelessly as herself. "Because 'tis wild," he answered. "Indeed, I know no other reason."

"It is my own," she said. "I grew stale in London."

"Not thy voice, Gyll. Methinks 'tis all for that I like thee."

She pouted, then smiled contentedly. "Come, Kyt, away into the bow. I'll sing to thee alone."

And in another part of the ship Vytal was recalling one of the rules of sailing, "That every evening the fly-boat come up and speak with the *Admiral*, at seven of the clock, or between that and eight; and shall receive the order of her course as Master Ferdinando shall direct."

"To-morrow at seven of the clock," he repeated, "or between that and eight."

CHAPTER II

"In frame of which nature hath showed more skill
Than when she gave eternal chaos form."
—MARLOWE, in *Tamburlaine.*

ALTHOUGH on the second night there came but little wind, the *Admiral's* master found it necessary to strike both topsails in order that the less speedy fly-boat might come up for his orders, as the rule demanded. But even with this decrease of canvas the sun had set and darkness fallen before the two ships lay side by side. At last, however, being lashed together with hawsers, so that men might pass from one to the other without difficulty, they drifted beam to beam—two waifs of the sea, seeking each other's companionship on the bed of the dark ocean, like children afraid of the night. But that night, at least, was kind to them, though only the lightest breeze favored their progress. The sea lay smooth as a mountain-guarded lake, save where the two slow-moving stems disturbed its surface, awakening ripples that rose, mingled, and dispersed, to seek their sleep again astern. And the ripples played with the waiting beams of stars, played and slumbered and played again, but beyond the circle of this night-time dalliance all was rest. Here the ripples were as smiles on the face of the waters, and the gleams were the gleams of laughing eyes; but there, far out, the sea slept, with none of this frivolous elfinry to break its peace.

Yet even now, up over the ocean, as a woman who rises from her bed and seeks her mirror to see if sleep has enhanced her beauty, the moon rose from behind a long, low hill of clouds, rose flushed as from a passionate hour, and paled slowly among the stars.

From the *Admiral's* deck a young man watched her. "It is Elizabeth," he said, "leaving Leicester for her people's sake. Roseate love gives place to silver sovereignty. The woman is sacrificed that we may gain a queen. 'Tis well that Mistress Dare owes no such costly relinquishment to the state. Few compel the love of men like Vytal—and yet—and yet I would have—"

But a laugh at the poet's side interrupted him, and a girl of comely figure thrust her arm through his own. "Moper," said she. "Come now; Roger Prat hath brought his bear to show us, and there will be no end of merrymaking. We have I know not what aboard—two morris-dancers, hobby-horses, and the like conceits of May-time."

"By Heaven, Gyll!" exclaimed Christopher, "one might think our governor was Lord of Misrule and the whole voyage but a Whitsun jollification. Wherefore these absurdities?"

"To entertain the savage people," * quoth Gyll, leading him off tyrannically. "On my word, Kyt, 'tis so! We would win them by fair means, you see."

"And you me by the same pleasantries," returned Marlowe, more lightly, as her mood captured him. "Mistress Croyden, thou'rt a savage thyself, a sweet savage, Gyll, and they're all for winning thee, I suppose."

She smiled complacently, with a full conscious-

*See Hakluyt's Voyages.

ness of the charm that made her popular, and Marlowe laughed at the expression of childlike vanity.

Then for an instant his brow clouded, his flattery became more lavish and exaggerated.

A tall, unmistakable figure had passed them in the darkness, like the person of a dream, and Vytal, having gone to the fly-boat, was even now in eager search.

The vessel, a small but cumbrous thing of the Dutch galliot type, with mountainous stern and stolid bow, offered little encouragement to the seeker. For its lights only revealed vague faces, while its masts and shadows, decks and turnings, seemed to form an agglomeration of dark hiding-places in which any one might all-unwittingly stand concealed. But for the moon, now sailing high, recognition would have been impossible.

The soldier, moreover, customarily so direct of method, felt a certain embarrassment and helplessness in this unprecedented adventure. Having until now avoided women with a real indifference, his present want of practice gave him the awkward feeling of a raw recruit. He was momentarily at a loss as to the best manner of procedure. Since he knew none aboard the vessel of whom he could inquire concerning Eleanor Dare, the chance of his meeting her, without special purpose, seemed slight. He considered the expedience of accosting at random some stranger, who might perhaps at least know the girl by sight. Weighing this plan in his mind, he approached a company of the voyagers, who, gathered in a circle about the mainmast, were kneeling devoutly, while an Oxford preacher read the evening prayer. It was in harmony with the tranquil evening—the picture of those forty or fifty men and women beneath a dim lanthorn, that, deepening the shad-

ows beyond its scope, lit up here and there a face reverent with supplication. And to the earnest piety in the pastor's voice, the restless water from stem to stern added a mystical whisper of unknown things.

At length, as a prayer for the general welfare of the colony drew to a close, Vytal, who had been standing on the outskirts of the circle, his head bowed and bared, raised his eyes to the preacher. Then, from the minister's uplifted gaze and hands outstretched in benediction, his glance wandered to the background of suppliant figures, whose faces, as they rose at the conclusion of the service, were distinctly visible. Soldiers were there, and gentlemen, mariners, planters, and cooks, musicians, carpenters, masons, and traders, and, in the foremost line of the circle, a little knot of women and children. Toward these Vytal turned his gaze. They seemed workers of a spell—co-workers with the murmurous sea, and the vague shadows, in subduing and softening the picture.

Vytal started and instinctively stepped forward. The whole scene had dissolved now, save for one predominant figure. Seemingly as though merely to form a background for her, these men and women knelt there; as though to shine upon her alone, the lanthorn had been hung above her head; as though the shadows, daring not to cross her, were there to obscure all other faces that hers might be the better seen; as though to her the sea whispered, for she alone could understand.

Vytal stood motionless, watching her with hunger in his eyes.

Her beauty, of that rare kind which disarms criticism even while suggesting it, was not a flash to startle fleetingly the observer, but a subtle charm,

with all those deeply suggestive qualities of form and feature which weave themselves into the very heart of memory. Hers was no brilliant contrast of color in hair and brows and cheeks, but rather a perfect harmony. The light brown of her hair blent with her hazel eyes and with the fine straight lines above them. Her color came and went with each change of expression, like the transitory flush of earliest morning; but generally her face was of a clear cream tint, which died away softly in the russet hair.

The worshippers were now separating, and she, by the side of a thin, weak-looking man, who, from Marlowe's description, was probably her brother, came near to Vytal.

He stepped back into a dense shadow, turning half away.

"Nay," he heard her say, coldly, "you know I would be alone oftentimes at evening. Solitude and reverie are indispensable to some natures, and mine is one of these. I shall be safe, and if need be you can find me when you will up there in the stern." With that she left her companion. But at first Vytal could not bring himself to follow her. She had expressed a wish: it was his law. Yet, as the minutes went by, seeming hours, he began to grow fearful lest some harm should befall the girl, and so set out in quest of her.

There, on the top deck, that she might have no roof above her head, but only the sky, she stood leaning against the bulwark and gazing down into the water far below. This bulwark, although much lower and narrower than those of the Spanish type, which on galleys were sometimes three or four feet thick, walling in the lofty sterns like castle ramparts, was, as may be imagined, no unstable support for

so light a burden. Nevertheless, Vytal, considering the possibility of a sudden wave causing the ship to lurch violently, and wanting this or any other excuse, no matter how preposterous, to render justifiable his intrusion on her desired solitude, stepped to the girl's side.

She turned slowly toward him, and, stroking back a lock of hair from her forehead, looked up into his face. "And so you are truly here in flesh and fell," she said, with a certain wonder, yet no surprise, as though her thoughts had not been interrupted, but rather realized, by the actual appearance of their subject. It was as if she had known, with no need of ordinary information to give her knowledge. And strangely enough her lack of surprise brought Vytal no astonishment, but only a slight perplexity and gladness. He had dimly surmised that she would know, but could not explain the reason of her intuition. And yet, while wanting words, he only gazed at her, a look of regret crossed his face.

"You seem not overjoyed, Mistress Dare."

To this she made no answer, but withdrew her eyes, and he saw their long lashes almost touch her cheeks as she looked down once more into the water. "I implore your pardon," he said, a low note of pain in his never-faltering voice. "But I had not deemed your reverie so sacred. 'Twas a man's rough error," and he turned away.

"Stay. In going you are guilty of the only error. I would not have you leave me with the word 'ingrate' on your lips. Nay, make no denial. I must, in truth, have seemed ungrateful." She fully believed —and perhaps there was vanity in the supposition —that he had followed her, that even the ocean's breadth had not deterred him, and the belief deprived *her somewhat* of her perfect self-command. She was

looking up at him now, her hazel eyes wide open, helpless in expression and for the moment like a child's. "I have not yet said 'I thank you.'" He made a deprecatory gesture. "No," she persisted, with a glance more free. "Oh, why are brave men ever thus, turning away when we would offer them our feeble words of gratitude, while they who merit not a smile of recompense bow low, and wait, and wait, for unearned thanks? Yet what can I say? That you are a knight worthy of the name? That I have never seen a nobler play of arms? That you saved my—honor? And then, after all this, am I to repeat 'I thank you, I thank you,' as I would to some fop stooping for my fan."

"Faith," he returned, "'tis the duty of some to pick up fans; 'tis but the duty of others to—"

"Defend a fashionable ruff," she concluded, smiling, "against lawful shears. Yes, I suppose you would put it that way. 'Twas such a little thing—so trivial—a rapier against scissors! Oh, perhaps I am wrong"—her tone grew bantering to cover her recognition of a certain grim power in the man. "It may be you boast by the mere belittlement of your action. The most arrant braggadocio lies often in a mock-modest 'It was naught,' a self-depreciative silence. Thank you, then, sir, for the timely preservation of my ruff." And she laughed, as the ripples under the bow were laughing, with a fairy music. Yet a tone of sadness, deep as the sea, underlay the feigned amusement in her voice.

"The ruff was a flower's calyx," he said.

"Nay, now, that ill-fits you, sir. I had not thought to find flattery from such an one." She raised her eyebrows with unaccustomed archness, as though by look to maintain her usually perfect dignity, which her words, whether she would or no, seemed

bent on frittering away. "Why, 'twas far better put by the villain who insulted me: 'A bud's outer petals fallen,' or some such pretty speech. And you but steal his—"

"Nay, madam, you know well it was—"

"Oh, original, then—'tis little better. So readily conceived a metaphor has doubtless been made a hundred times concerning ruffs. You pay the best compliments with your sword. No, no; be not so crestfallen. We are but newly met, that's all. You do not understand—forgive me, Master—how now, have I not yet learned your name?"

"'Tis John Vytal."

"John Vytal," she repeated, slowly. "It were easy to play on the name and show its meaning, but to them who've seen you I doubt not it needs no interpretation." He would have questioned her then, but she hastened back to the first subject. "One thing piques my curiosity—the manner of your escape. Were the retainers of Sir Walter Raleigh so speedy to bring you succor?"

"No, I saw them not. Once you had gone I stayed no longer."

"Stayed no longer?" She opened her large eyes very wide in surprise.

"Nay."

"You speak as though you could have left at will."

"The will was there, madam."

"But the way—the way?" she demanded, impatiently.

"And the way, too."

"Your brevity is badinage," she declared, with an imperious toss of her head.

"Your badinage cruelty," he returned.

"Oh, you are not all silence and swordsmanship," she laughed, with a trace of the persistent raillery

in her voice. "But I have asked you concerning your way of escape."

"From the cruelty?"

"No." The word came impatiently, as though she were wholly unaccustomed to resistance. "I see you parry in more ways than one." And her fingers played about the hood-clasp beneath her chin.

"Less hopefully in one way than another, Mistress Dare."

At this her manner, curiously changing, became graver, the assumed archness and petulance for the moment leaving her. "You speak of cruelty," she said, in a very low voice, again turning to gaze down at the sea, "and of hope. Sometimes, Captain Vytal, they are synonymous;" and then, before he could make rejoinder, she added, quickly, "I pray you tell me of the escape?"

"'Twas through a window overlooking the Thames," he answered, in bewilderment. "And I swam ashore."

"Ah, I see. I thought perhaps you had followed us through the porter's lodge."

"No; the way was blocked."

"Tell me," she asked, "was it your plan, our reaching safety as we did, or Master Marlowe's?"

"Neither his nor mine."

"Neither! Whose, then?"

"At least, in a way, neither. You see, I remembered the story of the porter's lodge. In 1554 Wyatt gained that building by mounting to the leads of an adjoining house, and thus made his way onto the bridge. Hence I knew there must be passageway to the Bankside."

"And you remembered even while your sword demanded so much attention?"

"It came to my mind."

She smiled with a kind of wonder in her eyes, and then a hint of irony. "Of course the plan was not yours—it was clearly Wyatt's."

"Another rebel's," observed Vytal, for the first time looking off across the water with a trace of abstraction in his face.

"Rebel? How mean you rebel?"

"Naught, but that it seems my fate to be at odds with the world."

"For instance, to rebel against bear-baiting," she suggested, glancing at him sideways. "I heard of that, and recognized the rebel from description."

"Readily, madam, I doubt not. They called me a long, lean wolf, a grizzled terror, with the usual flattery."

"Yes," she said, nodding her hooded head and pursing her lips, "they did."

"And very truly," he averred.

"Oh, fie, sir! You seek a contradictory opinion."

"You know I do not."

"Nay, then perhaps you are not sure of it." His simplicity and directness vexed her. She seemed strangely distraught by nervousness, and her manner was unnatural.

"You wound me, Mistress Dare."

"Hast so much vanity?" she queried.

"And the wound," he went on, disregarding her uncontrollable banter, "is not from your words, but manner more. Somehow the mere being with you brings me pain."

"Our interview is of your own seeking, Master Vytal."

"I had not thought," he declared, in a tone almost angry, "that one with such a face, such a voice,

could be so unkind," and once more he started as if to go.

But she put out her hand with a detaining gesture. Her manner again grew serious, more like the deep, far-reaching, silent sea than its near-by surface, flurried by the ship.

"Oh, forgive me again! It seems as though I must ever ask forgiveness from you—from you to whom I owe so much. Believe me, there is a woman's heart beneath all this—I have not said that to any man—'tis my reward to you—and the woman's heart knows pity—that, too, is a reward—make what you can of it." She was speaking tremulously now. "Only—remember—that hope is cruel—that a little pain may avert a deeper suffering—this was my intention—believe me, I pray thee believe, John Vytal—I am deeply grateful underneath the mask. Fate brought us together in a moment. And then you followed—followed, I suppose—" she hesitated, her breast heaving and tears gathering in her eyes.

"No," declared Vytal, anxious in his bewilderment to console her as best he might, and looking down at her for the first time as at a child. "No, I knew not you were coming. I believed that I was saying farewell."

The tears lingered on her lashes without falling. An unreadable expression came into her face, whether entirely of relief, as Vytal thought, or with a slight trace of regret and shame, deep-hidden, she herself could not have told.

"I thought you had found out," she almost whispered at last.

"Nay, I had no chance to seek you. I was pledged to come. Otherwise I would have sought till—"

"Stay," she exclaimed, imperatively, "you must

not speak so!"—and then, in lower tones—"but if of my coming you had no knowledge, is it not yet more the work of Fate?"

"Or of God."

"Nay, God is good." There was naught in her voice now save sadness blent with doubt. "Perhaps I misread a face—perhaps a name is but a name, and stands for nothing—perhaps— Oh, sir, is it wrong to speak only in riddles? What have we said? What has led us to so strange a conversation in so short a time? Come, let us talk of the voyage, the sea, the all-pervading night. The night conceals so much, being merciful, but when the day comes all this mercy and mystery will go—these ocean whispers, this unutterable darkness, the stars, the moon, even the scent of the salt will be understood. We shall say 'tis healthful, invigorating, and no more; but to-night it is the subtle odor of some sea-forest in a world below, or of flowers in a coral glade. To-morrow the ship will be of wood and iron, whereas to-night—who comprehends this long, slow-moving shadow and those silver, moonlit wings above that bear it forward to some far haven of dreams? To-night we are spellbound; in the morning, if the wind still sleeps, we shall call the spell a calm." She paused, and, leaning back against the bulwark, still looked up into the mist of shrouds. The moonlight, ensilvering each listless sail, fell full upon her face, giving the unshed tears an Orient lustre, and the cheeks a pallor of unreality. Under the edge of her hood the moonbeams strove to make their way, but could not, and so the gentle but less timid breeze brought down a strand of her hair to turn it paler and more ethereal, till it, too, was no more than a moon-spun thread. Her little hands were clasped together and her lips just parted, as though she were

about to answer some voice that she alone could hear.

"You are a spirit," said Vytal.

And then—then she laughed, and the laugh, although fraught with sadness, transformed her instantly. She became a child with it, a sweet, lovable, beautiful child — all reality, innocence, and health. The laughter in her lips converted these fastnesses of expression to its playground, and, romping, chased away all visionary looks. Her cheeks, dimpling, lost their pallor in a blush. One hand smoothed back the straying lock, the other drew her hood yet lower, while her hazel eyes looking up from under it seemed to possess the magic brown of a russet-bedded brook with sunlight playing beneath its surface—and the sunlight was this wonderful transforming laughter.

"You are a child," he declared, with more of passion in his voice and less of silent wonder. The tone startled her; the grave look came back into her face, and she stepped from the moonlight into the shadow of a sail.

"Nay," he said, with an incomprehensible sadness in his voice. "Now you are a woman. The sky and the sea are no more changeable."

"A woman," she whispered, compressing her lips and turning white, as though nerving herself for a strenuous effort of will—"a woman, and—and—but no, wait, sleep, dream, and dreams will bring you happiness—look you, the sky seems clear—the sea is tranquil. Yet come!"

With a hand on his arm she drew him across the deck into the dense shadow of the rigging. "See, it is but a step from light to darkness, and then—look—the sky!"

He followed the direction of her gaze, and saw

again the long ridge of cloud, from behind which the moon had risen. The hill was a mountain now, and black with storm.

"It comes all too quickly," she said, shivering, and gave him her hand. It was very cold. Bending low he kissed the fingers, and then, holding them in his firm grasp, looked down into her eyes as though to read their meaning if he could. But still making no answer in any way, she trembled. His mute bewilderment and uncomprehending pain were becoming unendurable to her.

"Oh, mayhap it were kinder," she whispered, finally, half to herself, "and yet I cannot see that deep face show greater pain. Nay, let us not hasten the storm ourselves; it comes whate'er we do, then perchance"—she was forcing a show of cheerfulness into her manner—"perchance, after all, you may not mind so much. Good-night, oh, good-night—" and before he could realize it her hand was withdrawn from his and her hooded figure had gone away into the shadows.

CHAPTER III

"Such reasons make white black,
And dark night day."
—MARLOWE, in *Edward the Second.*

MORNING broke fair, and seemingly the wind, which had freshened, was defending its two charges by driving the clouds from a threatening course. Throughout the day Vytal saw no more of Eleanor Dare. In the evening he returned to the *Admiral* with a heavy heart and thoughts intent on the elucidation of the mystery, until, on passing a window of the room of state, he saw beneath a hanging lamp of Italian workmanship a face that so startled him as to command his whole interest and attention. It was the face of Sir Walter St. Magil. Vytal looked again, to prove his first glance correct, and then stood for a moment in doubt before entering. But the next words made him, against his will, a listener by the command of duty. Stepping to a vantage-point in adequate darkness, from which he could survey the whole cabin and hear the sentences of his late antagonist, he waited; for an oath from Ferdinando, followed quickly by a cautioning gesture from St. Magil, betrayed the covert importance of their conversation.

"It is against the first duty of a sailing-master," declared Simon, frowning and toying nervously with the upturned corners of a chart, or map, that lay before him on the table; "I mislike the suggestion

strongly." At this St. Magil's face, scarred upon the left cheek, from the dagger which Vytal had flung at him, and blighted yet more evilly by the indrawn eye, grew scornful and supercilious.

"Oh, an you are so faint-hearted," he returned, "we must bide our time. 'Twill matter little in the end to us, but to you, now," and he leaned forward across the table impressively, "it will matter more. 'Twere well, though, to discuss the thing in Spanish; even the arras hath ears."

"Matter to me, Sir Walter—how so?" queried the master, conforming with the other's suggestion regarding their speech. But Vytal fortunately understood the foreign tongue, thanks to many a campaign against the Spaniards.

St. Magil hesitated and looked away with a calculating air, then, smiling, replied lightly, "Well, say to the tune of a thousand crowns."

Ferdinando's small eyes glistened like a rat's. "On your word, Sir Walter?"

"On my word, Simon, a thousand crowns if the boat arrives not in Virginia." There was emphasis on the condition.

"'Tis done, then."

"At an exorbitant price," added St. Magil. "But we pay it willingly. To-night, then"—his voice sank so low as to be almost inaudible to Vytal at the open window—"to-night, then, we leave them behind. The fly-boat's pilot, another of my beneficiaries, will play havoc with her steerage-gear. This is their chart, which I procured. The plan has been well arranged. 'Tis for you to clap on sail and leave them."

"Mary save me!" exclaimed Ferdinando, shuddering. "I fear they will perish."

"Nay, good Simon, this Bay of Portugal holds

many ships, some of which will doubtless succor the fly-boat."

"Or, being Spaniards, sink her!"

"Yes, there is that chance, I allow. I have told the pilot, in case of attack, to surrender, proclaim himself my servant, and so save the rest from death."

"And so," whispered Ferdinando, "deliver them to a bondage worse than death."

St. Magil shrugged his shoulders. "It is but a choice of evils," he avowed. "In Virginia they would fare yet worse. With them to strengthen it the colony would resist our men from St. Augustine, whereas now I look for a quick surrender. There will be no fight."

"We lead our countrymen into a trap, Sir Walter, God forgive us!"

"Our countrymen!" ejaculated St. Magil. "I took you for a Spaniard, Ferdinando."

"By parentage only," responded the master. "But you are an English knight."

"Ay, English," allowed St. Magil, gnawing his mustache with a row of yellow teeth, "and I would save the English from their worst enemies. I mean not Spaniards, but themselves." He rose from the table, and, stretching his arms abroad, yawned aloud.

"A thousand crowns," muttered Ferdinando, "or say five hundred, the other half being laid aside for masses for my soul."

St. Magil laughed sleepily. "It might pay," he drawled, "to turn priest, if all else failed," with which he leaned forward on the table, being in truth overcome by fatigue, and, with his face between his outstretched arms, was soon breathing heavily.

Ferdinando left the cabin.

Vytal, eluding him, entered it. The room was a

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long one, considering the size of the ship. Its walls, hung with arras, creaked occasionally as the vessel pitched and rolled, but the creaking, muffled by the heavy hangings, sounded ghostly and added to the gloom which the wavering lamp in no way dispelled.

Vytal stood over St. Magil, his lank, stern figure seeming like the form of Death in Death's own room. His dark, olive cheeks were pallid and drawn, his hand tensely gripping the hilt of his rapier, the so-called "bodkin." And his eyes, cast down on the sleeper, held disdain mingled with their fury.

But Vytal only gazed and gazed at the treacherous soldier beneath him, until at last, withdrawing his gaunt hand from the rapier-hilt, he held it with open palm above the other's shoulder, as though, by awakening his enemy, to throw away his own advantage that both might meet on even terms. But his eye fell on the crude chart which Ferdinando had been examining. Silently he folded it and concealed it inside the breast of his doublet. Then, as if with an actual physical effort, he turned and left the apartment.

The fly-boat, now cast off from the *Admiral*, slowly fell astern, until her light seemed no more than a will-o'-the-wisp and she a shadow piloted thereby in whimsical manner. The sea fretted under a stiffening breeze, and not a star shone. The *Admiral*, although careening drunkenly, made good progress, for, obedient to shouted commands of Ferdinando, her crew were flinging aloft an unwonted spread of sail.

On deck Vytal met Hugh Rouse, whom he questioned tersely concerning the whereabouts of Roger Prat.

"He is in the forecastle, captain, with King Lud, the bear."

"Fetch him, Hugh. Quick!" And the giant,

with darkening brow, hastened forward. In a moment he had returned with his companion.

"Give full heed," commanded Vytal, glancing sharply about to make sure he was unheard by others. "There is a plot afoot to desert the fly-boat. That plot at all hazards must not be disclosed. We should lose by immediate accusation, as we know not who are loyal. My plan is this: I shall jump into the sea; you two then give outcry as if a man by accident had fallen overboard. Ferdinando will of necessity heave to. In the mean time, as though distracted, fire a piece and blow on trumpets, as the sailing rule demands. Thus the fly-boat will have time to come up to us, and then—but leave that to me." He turned to one and the other to make certain of their comprehension, and found it. They were accustomed, these two men, to their captain's succinct commands in moments of emergency. But Roger Prat stepped forward with an expression indicative of disobedience. "Nay, captain," he said, with a broad grin, "*I* am the hogshead and will float; 'tis better so. Under your favor, I go myself. The outcry being thine, will have more effect." And before Vytal could hinder him, the short, grotesque fellow, winking and wagging his head at Rouse, flung himself, with a loud cry, into the sea.

In three minutes the ship was in an uproar. Men ran hither and thither, fore and aft, in a confusion of useless endeavor. The women, startled by the commotion, gathered for the most part amidships near the main-mast, while others, among whom were the first to learn the cause of the excitement, sought the high, castellated stern, from which they might look off with straining eyes, intent on catching sight of Roger Prat, who had already gained a widespread popularity. Hugh Rouse, at a word from Vytal,

went quickly to the master's mate, then at the helm, and informed him of the occurrence. Without hesitation, the mate and his assistants put the helm hard down, throwing the vessel into the wind. For an instant she stood poised, a breathless creature, her sails flapping, and then, minding her rudder still further, started back over her course. In the mean time, Rouse, who had hurried forward, gained the poop, and, waving a torch he had procured from one of the sailors, shouted with the full power of his lusty lungs to the crew of the fly-boat.

"Fool," cried a voice behind him, "there is no need of that!" Turning, he saw St. Magil peering out across the water.

But the two ships were now rapidly approaching each other. Seeing this, Rouse desisted and turned to St. Magil with an agitated air, concealing suspicion fairly well, considering his honest, open countenance and utter incapacity for strategy. In this the darkness aided him. "I know not what to do," he declared. "It is my friend who hath fallen overboard." He held the torch high for an instant, so that its fitful glare fell upon St. Magil's face, and then, instinctively realizing that it might betray the look of hate and distrust in his own eyes, he flung it far out into the water. There was this about Hugh Rouse which is rare in men of slow wit: he recognized his disadvantage. "I thought, Sir Walter, that you were in London."

"So I was," returned the sinister knight, "a few days ago," and, suppressing an oath—for the fly-boat, having been alarmed by a flourish of trumpets, was now within hailing distance—he hurried away to seek Simon Ferdinando.

But Vytal had forestalled him. Immediately after Prat's prompt action, he himself had gone quickly

to the master. "The unfortunate man," he said, "is one of my followers. With your permission, Ferdinando, I go to his rescue myself. The least we can do is to lower the ship's boat."

Simon, evading his glance, looked hesitatingly at the choppy sea. "I mislike risking several lives," he muttered, as though to himself, with feigned prudence, "for one man."

"I will go, then, alone," avowed Vytal, quietly, "or with one other. Here, Rouse," and he turned to his lieutenant, who had joined him. "We go to Roger's assistance." But still he looked at Ferdinando, as if deferring to the master by awaiting his assent. Simon, finding no plausible excuse for further delay, and fearing to arouse the other's suspicions, made a pretence of ready acquiescence amounting almost to eagerness.

As Vytal turned away he found himself face to face with Marlowe. "I go with you," said the poet.

Vytal nodded. "Quick, then!" And in another instant they had started out in the small boat upon their errand of rescue.

The sea, running higher and higher, tossed about the stanch little craft like a cockle-shell, but the brawny arms of the three rowers, holding her stem to the waves, managed to urge her slowly forward. The fly-boat now lay alongside the *Admiral*, almost within rope-throw, and both vessels hung as close as could be in the wind, their bowsprits bobbing tipsily, their canvas half empty and rattling.

The rowers strained their eyes and hallooed loudly, but there was no sight of the missing man nor any sound in answer save the flap, flap of the great square sails, the rush of the wind, the crash of the spray from broken foam-crests, and shouts from the swaying decks.

The rowers, now under the *Admiral's* stern, were pointing the nose of their sea-toy toward the fly-boat. "Roger hath perished," said Hugh, hoarsely. "God save his brave soul!"

And then, in weird contrast to the grave words, there came to the ears of the three men a laugh and an incoherent call out of the near darkness. It was as though the blade of Hugh's oar had spoken. In amazement the men ceased rowing and gazed toward the black stern, from whose invisible water-line the sound had undoubtedly come. All steerage of the cock-boat being momentarily neglected, she swung round until a wave, catching her abeam, with all but disastrous results, washed her yet nearer to the grim hull. "Have a care!" cried the voice; "hold off!" And the rowers saw a dark thing bobbing up and down close to the ship. In another moment a man, grasping the end of a long rope in his hand, was clambering, with the aid of his comrades, into the small boat. "Did ye not see," he said, immediately assisting at one of the oars, "that I grabbed a hawser as I jumped? 'Twas made fast, thank the Lord, somewhere amidships, and here have I been dangling out behind as comfortable as can be—" but his words belied him, for, even with the assertion on his lips, his last remaining strength failed suddenly, and the inimitable Roger Prat fell back senseless.

"To the fly-boat—quick!" said Vytal.

The cockle-shell was now but a dancing shadow, only a little darker than the sea to those who looked down on it from the *Admiral's* stern far above. Yet in the eyes of one man, at least, that riotous black spot was a thing by all means to be avoided. "Simon, it is the solution of our problem. That man you say is John Vytal, and, I add, the most cursed mischief-

maker under heaven. Had I known they were coming, he and his slavish crew, we might have been driven to no such pass." The speaker lowered his voice and went on as he had begun, in the Spanish language. "But the chance is ours—yours."

"How mine?" The question issued with a shivering sound from the other's teeth.

"Let me see. One thousand crowns," returned St. Magil, still leaning over the bulwark to gaze down like an evil buzzard on the bobbing shadow beneath him, "and another thousand—and, if it must be, yet another thousand." He turned, smiling, to note the effect of his offer. "All this if you leave that insignificant cock-boat behind us, and it comes not safe to Virginia."

"It is impossible."

"Wherefore?"

"Captain Vytal is one of the governor's assistants. The desertion will be reported, and I, Sir Walter, answerable to the lords of her Majesty's most honorable privy council."

"Most honorable idiots!" exclaimed the other. "'Tis easily explained. They are lost—we have waited—we cannot find them—where are they? I see no sign whatever of the boat," and, smiling yet more blandly, he turned his back to the bulwark. "It is as simple as that—just turn your back."

"Before God, I will not!" and Simon started away, as if he would end the matter there and then.

"You find no difficulty in forsaking the fly-boat," sneered St. Magil.

"Nay, for that at least can live. But this plaything must surely perish if deserted in so rough a sea."

"No, Simon, it will gain the fly-boat."

Ferdinando returned to the bulwark and looked

down once more at the object of their discussion. He could see it battling now against great odds, for the shadow made no headway in any direction and both ships were slowly leaving it in their wake.

"Keep your purse. I'll not play the assassin for you or any other man," and again the master would have left. But he heard a quick step behind him, and turned suddenly. A slender gleam crossed his sight, and he felt himself pressed back against the bulwark. The menacing glimmer seemed to get into his eyes and into his soul, bringing terror to both.

"For two thousand, then," he said, hoarsely, "'tis done."

"Thank you, my good Simon. Thank you, and all this for turning your back."

There was a double meaning in the words, and Ferdinando shuddered at thought of it.

"We will go now and give orders to the mate," said St. Magil—"*together.*"

CHAPTER IV

"Whose eyes being turned to steel
Will sooner sparkle fire
Than shed a tear."
—MARLOWE, in *Edward the Second.*

ELEANOR DARE stood alone near the bulwark of the fly-boat, her thoughts shapeless, until at last a dark object, also without form, rose and fell on the water within range of her unseeing vision. Slowly her consciousness grew more acute, and the thing became real to her. Slowly it took shape and became a boat, a ship's cock-boat, contending with all its little bravery against the waves. She heard, with an increasing heed to them, the shouts of men from the deck of the *Admiral*, and noticed for the first time that the governor's ship, having stood back upon her course, was now abreast of the fly-boat. But soon her eyes, with a renewed attention to the realities of her surroundings, saw the *Admiral* stand away again to the westward. She perceived with surprise that, considering the gale, the larger vessel carried an unwarrantable spread of canvas; and realized, not without alarm, that the fly-boat, if thus outsailed for many hours, must soon be left astern far beyond the regulation distance. And as to the small boat: was its present plight merely the unfortunate result of an attempt to bring some message from one ship to the other, or was it the outcome of a fell design on the part of Ferdinando? This last suspicion in Eleanor's mind was not without

foundation, for she had already entertained misgivings.

Suddenly a yet graver fear came to her. For the fly-boat's pilot, who at first had luffed his vessel up into the wind, imitating the example of the *Admiral's* master, now sent her plunging ahead again, paying no heed to the rowers, who struggled vainly in the fly-boat's wake. Realizing this, Eleanor, at last fully aware of the small boat's predicament, and alive to the demands of the moment, hurried aft to remonstrate with the helmsman. She was not certain that the pilot's intentions were treacherous, nor that the cock-boat had been seen. Furthermore, being ignorant of the rowers' identities, she supposed them to be but mariners of the *Admiral's* crew. But they were men elevated for the moment to a position of supreme importance by mortal danger, the leveller of all degrees.

With good policy, on her way aft, Eleanor gave the alarm to all she passed, and thus brought many with her to the pilot. The latter, a burly seaman, whose unkempt red hair and beard swathed his pock-marked face like a flaming rag, showed much astonishment at seeing a number of his passengers, led by a woman, excitedly running toward him, as fast as might be, considering the lurch and reel of the clumsy ship.

"There is a small boat astern of us," said Eleanor, arriving first at the helm. "Ferdinando must have forgotten her. There hath been some mistake."

The pilot turned, with a grunt of incredulity, and glanced off in the direction of her outstretched hand. "I see naught," he returned, gruffly. "'Tis an illusion of the sight."

But at that instant a voice came after them over the water from the darkness far astern. They heard

but a feeble note, an inarticulate sound, yet the voice of Hugh Rouse, stentorian and resonant, had flung out the incoherent cry from his great lungs in full power, to beat its way against the wind. With constantly failing strength it overtook the ship and died a mere whisper on eager ears. But there could be no mistake; a score of men had heard. For an instant the pilot hesitated and glanced at the little company furtively under his fiery beetle-brows. Then, with a hoarse command to his crew, he shoved the helm hard down, and once more turned the fly-boat into a stupid, tentative thing, hanging in the wind, drowsily expectant and poised in awkward fashion, like a fat woman on tiptoe looking for her child.

And the child went to her slowly with faltering steps. Tumbling over the ridges of water and picking herself up again, nothing daunted, the cock-boat came finally into view. In a few minutes the rowers were on the ship's deck. Vytal, whose sinews were of steel, and Hugh Rouse, a great rock of hardihood, showed small fatigue, but Roger Prat, who had just recovered consciousness, leaned heavily against the bulwark, striving to force a jest through chattering teeth, while the water still dripped from his clothes.

Marlowe stood apart, seemingly all-forgetful of his exertion, his dark eyes intent on the face of Eleanor Dare.

Many torches, now, in the hands of inquisitive voyagers, were throwing lurid streaks of flame across the gloom. Their light fell full upon Eleanor, revealing to the poet a realization of his dream. In all the rich colors of his limitless fancy he had pictured her often to himself since the night of their flight from London Bridge. The picture now was corporate, and Fancy inadequate before the Real. The many proffers of assistance, the come and go of hasty figures. the

general commotion and curiosity were lost to Marlowe's heed.

At last, when the by-standers had separated, he approached her, and, speaking her name, bowed low. As though awaking from a deep reverie, she turned, and gradually recognition came into her eyes.

"Ah, Master Marlowe, it is you; I had not thought to see you again so soon."

"How so, Mistress Dare; did I not tell you I might come?"

"Yes; now I remember you hinted that, if in the morning the wind blew west, you would follow it. The responsibility of decision was too great for you."

"Perhaps; moreover, there is much wisdom, methinks, in leaving our destiny to the wind, for the human heart is no less fickle and wayward in its guidance of our steps, and following that, we blame ourselves, yet who would arraign the breeze as purposeless and false?"

She made no answer at first, but looked off across the stretch of water, now growing wider between them and the *Admiral*. "I trust," she said at length, half to herself, "that we shall have no cause to complain against the breeze. 'Twas but last night I thought a storm menaced our advance. Ah, well, 'tis a hazardous voyage at best. I wonder that you, who were not forced to come, should court so many perils."

"Not forced," he said, lowering his voice; "what, then, is force? Ay, madam, 'tis force and the hazard bring me here. The very peril compels me."

He sought to hold her glance, but could not, for again she was looking off to the larger ship.

"You consider the risk so grave, then?" she queried, with a troubled air.

"The gravest, madam," he answered, a look of

reckless pleasure crossing his face; "with glittering danger so woven through the warp and woof of future days as to seduce a man's best wisdom and seem a golden fleece. We court the danger for the danger's sake." His words came as an undertone to her thoughts, disturbing, but not breaking, abstraction, until suddenly, as if with an impulse, he questioned her. "I would fain ask you, Mistress Dare, concerning your departure that night from Southwark, and your friend in the barge, a man—" he broke off, for he had put the question with no need of further inquiry.

"That is readily answered," she replied, nevertheless, with hesitancy. "You see, I durst not return to Lambeth through the borough, and thus expose us both again to danger, although I knew that my father would entertain misgivings and grave fears for my safety. When you know him better you will recognize his deep solicitude for every person's welfare; how much more, then, for his daughter's?"

"Know him better!" exclaimed Marlowe, in surprise. "But I have never seen him."

"Indeed, you must have met him. My father is the governor of this colony—Governor John White."

"But—but *you*," ejaculated the poet, in bewilderment, "are Mistress Dare."

"Being the wife," she declared, with an almost imperceptible tremor in her voice, "of Master Ananias Dare, one of my father's twelve assistants. It was he who came in the barge that night on his way to join us at Lambeth, and, seeing me in such sorry plight, decided to retrace his way with me to London."

"A wife!" and then Marlowe said a strange thing, as though wording a second thought that rushed to him on the heels of his first shock. "It will kill him."

He was speaking of another man even in that moment—thinking and speaking of another man. For the intensity of that other, the naked soul, the dominant will, the inexorable fatality were compelling, by sheer force, the homage of his immediate circle. It was simply the irresistible power of a great character at work. And there is no human influence so near omniscience.

She paid no heed to his low exclamation, but, with a few irrelevancies, left him.

He had but little time to seek the meaning of her abrupt departure, for at this moment Vytal joined him and tersely revealed the facts regarding the plot of St. Magil. The poet showed more surprise on hearing of St. Magil's presence than on having his instinctive suspicions verified concerning Ferdinando's treachery.

"Dost thou know the extent of this treason?" he asked.

"Nay, therein lies the rub. The pilot is doubtless far from clean-handed, and, for aught we know, several others among us, in greater or less degree, conspire to work our ruin."

"Yes," observed Marlowe, thoughtfully, "in St. Magil's words, as you o'erheard them, I seem to hear the whisper of a wide conspiracy in which even the Spaniards of St. Augustine will play their part. But tell me, would not decisive action here and now defeat them more surely than cautious measures?"

"I think not," replied the soldier, turning in the direction of approaching footsteps. "Who comes?"

"'Tis I, captain, a wet dog, at your service."

"Get you below, Roger, for warmth, and a change of garments."

"'Tis impossible, sir; such as I find adequate attire most difficult to borrow. Hast never seen me in

a moderate doublet? The sight, they say, is worthy of a stage play. Moreover, the only warmth of interest now lies in the oven of Sheol, wherein, 'tis my ardent hope, Master Pilot will soon be roasting by your command."

Vytal smiled. "Justice demands patience," he said. "Do you, then, seek Hugh, bidding him go among the mariners with eyes and ears awake. And likewise make investigation for yourself. Find an you can the limits of the plot, map out its course, survey the field. Bring proofs. 'Tis better so."

"Justice!" muttered Roger to himself, starting away—"'tis always justice!" Joining Rouse, he thrust his hand through the big soldier's arm. "A stoup of liquor, Hugh, will loose my tongue, and fit it well for questions. 'Tis to be all questions now, and never an answer from our lips. Big lout, think'st thou it is in thee to hint a query and induce reply with never a trace of eagerness? Nay, but follow me, King Lud's Lord Chancellor—Heaven preserve his forsaken Majesty—ay, sirrah, follow me, and praise good fortune for the chance. Be mute. Keep tongue between teeth, and thy great paw well within a league of sword-hilt." And so the garrulous Prat ran on, after his usual important manner, until they had gained the forecastle.

In the mean time Vytal and Marlowe, near the main-mast, were striving, by discussion and induction, to obtain a more comprehensive grasp of the situation. The soldier had long suspected St. Magil of treasonable intrigues, the nature of which, however, was undiscoverable. In the Low Country camps for the last three years there had been rumors of treachery, with which Sir Walter's name had been vaguely associated. Some had openly pronounced him a spy in the pay of Philip of Spain, while others

had as firmly declared him loyal to Henry and Elizabeth.

"We are his match at least in sword-play," observed Marlowe, finally. "'Twas proved conclusively upon the bridge."

"We are his match," returned Vytal, with a quiet confidence, "in all things."

"I trust we may prove this, too," said the poet, regarding his companion with marked admiration.

"We shall."

It was now nearly midnight, and the wind left a long, rolling sea, in which the fly-boat lay wearily, like a landsman in a hammock, uncomfortably asleep. The decks were deserted save for the burly figure of the pilot at the helm, the two shadows near the mainmast, and a ghost-like sailor here and there on watch. The *Admiral's* dim light had gone down over the horizon.

"Desolation," muttered Marlowe. "All desolation. It seems as though the God—if God there be—were sleeping."

"There is a God," said Vytal, simply.

The poet smiled sceptically, and would have rejoined at some length, but a cloaked figure came to them out of the darkness. It was Eleanor Dare. Marlowe started back as though struck without warning, and turned to Vytal with a jealous look. But the glance of enmity passed as quickly as it came, leaving only deep affection and sympathy in the poet's face. Instinctively he made as though to withdraw, and they, to his regret, offered no remonstrance. "You will find me," he said, "with the steersman. It may be well to watch him closely." And he left them.

"Captain Vytal," began Eleanor, "you must act with all speed. Indeed, I know not but that even

now I am too late." Despite her ominous words, she was speaking coldly, with a calmness almost mechanical. "We are in the hands of traitors paid by Spain."

"I know it well, Mistress Dare."

"You know it?"

"Yes;" and he told her very briefly the facts within his knowledge.

"It is worse than that. St. Magil withheld the full truth from Ferdinando. There is a conspiracy afoot to land us on the coast of Portugal. Before morning some twenty men in Sir Walter's pay will come upon the deck and overpower the mariners now here. I tell you, in order that you may summon as many soldiers hither from below, and save us."

"I thank you," he said, "but it cannot be."

"Cannot be!"

"Nay, for we know not who is loyal. My men and I must meet the knaves alone."

"Alone! God forgive me! It is the second time I place your life in peril."

"On the contrary, the second time you make it worth the living. But how came this knowledge to your ears?"

She hesitated only for an instant, and then answered him, with an icy chill in her tone, "From my husband."

"Your husband!" There was no tremor in the voice, but only a harsh finality, like the sound of a sword breaking. And for a moment, in which a lifetime seemed to drag itself ponderously by, there was utter silence.

"Take me to Master Dare," said Vytal, at last, mechanically. "We shall do well to confer together concerning the matter."

She looked up at him with wonder and surprise.

"You would see him?" she asked, as though her ears had deceived her; then, with a new bitterness: "I fear you will gain but little by the interview. My husband is"—her voice sank lower, with a note of deep shame in it, the shame of a great pride wounded —"is not himself." Then, turning, she led the way down to a large cabin in which the captain and the governor's assistants were accustomed to hold conference pertaining to the colony and voyage. "He is there," and she left Vytal at the cabin door.

CHAPTER V

". . . hath wronged your country and himself,
And we must seek to right it as we may."
—MARLOWE, in *Edward the Second.*

ENTERING immediately, Vytal found the room empty save for one man who sat before a long table in a peculiar posture and apparently half asleep. A silver flagon stood before him, its brim covered by two almost feminine hands, whose fingers were intertwined and palms held downward, as though to conceal or guard the contents of the cup. His head was bent forward until one cheek rested on the back of his clasped hands, while the other showed a central flush on a background of white, delicate skin. The man's eyes were not closed, but maintained their watch on the door with an evident effort, for the lids blinked drowsily as though soon they must succumb to sleep. The light of a three-branched candelabrum, flickering across the table, showed a face naturally fair, but marred by dissipation. The hair, light brown and of fine texture, hung down over a narrow forehead, and half concealed a well-formed ear. The eyes, always first to suffer from inebriety, showed but a trace of their lost brilliancy when the effort to keep awake was strongest. There was an aspect so pitiable in the man's whole attitude that Vytal, his face softening, shrank back as though to proceed no further with his interview. But overcoming the first shock occasioned by so weak and

forlorn a personality, the soldier went forward, with grim determination. "Is this Master Ananias Dare?" he demanded.

"Yes," came the answer, falteringly, "Master Dare, at your service," and the slim fellow, attempting to rise, swayed and fell back again into his chair. "Rough sea," he muttered. "Great waves—mad boat."

Vytal drew a chair to the table, and moving the candelabrum to one side, sat down opposite the drinker. "I come to inquire concerning a plot of which you have knowledge."

The effect of this unexpected statement was curious. "Plot!" exclaimed Ananias—"plot!" and he laughed a thick, uncomfortable laugh. "Now I know the boat is certainly mad. Who said 'plot'? Oh, who said 'plot'?" His voice, wailing, sank almost to a whisper. "I cannot believe it. I really cannot believe such extraor'nary statements. Have a cup o' wine; 'tis wine belies our fears. I thank thee, good wine—I thank thee for so great a courage. Oh, who said 'plot'?" and, lurching forward, he pushed a great silver tankard toward Vytal.

"'Tis wine," returned the soldier, fixing his gaze on the pitiful assistant, as though to force the words home with look as well as voice, "'tis wine brings danger. Another cup now, and mayhap you are fatally undone." He wished to play upon the other's cowardice, and turn, if he could, one weakness into strength to withstand another. The time was short in which to elicit the desired information, and the task not easy.

"Danger! there's no danger to me!" declared Ananias, unexpectedly. "Oh nay; how strange—danger—none whatever! 'Tis not for this I drink so deep; 'tis my wife—induces the condition!" His head fell

forward again to his hands, that now covered an empty cup. Quickly Vytal hid the half-full tankard beneath the table.

"'Tis she," said Ananias, again looking up sleepily, "my cousin, my peculiar wife. Why did I marry her—oh, why?"

Vytal's face grew tense, the veins on his forehead big like thongs.

"She is different," pursued Dare—"so different! 'Twas the queen did it. I sued so long, so very long, while Mistress Eleanor White would have none of me. And then, one day, coming to me like a child—yes, like a child," he repeated, weeping remorsefully, "she said: 'If thou'lt rest content with friendship for a time, perchance in the coming days I'll learn to love thee, cousin, but now I cannot. My father alone is in my heart.' That was after the queen had talked with her in private, and before she knew of my love for these big flagons—mad flagons!" He grasped the cup between his hands as though to caress or crush it. "And I was so wild of love and jealousy that I said, 'Yes; I swear to be no more than friend.'" He was retrospecting as if to himself, and paying no heed to the listener, whose struggle for the mastery of his own emotion had turned him for the time to stone.

"I was so wild of jealousy, for there was my Lord of Essex courting her— Oh, this boat—this boat—'tis, in troth, mad—its reel gets into my head— Ah, why did she marry me? 'Twas because the queen promised that her father should come to Virginia and be governor—her beloved father—instead of going to the Tower for some trivial offence. And she was kind to me, yet so cold that I durst not even touch her hand—but then I grew more brave with wine. Her little hand was mine despite remonstrance, the wine im-

parting courage to hold it fast. No bravery, say you, in wine? Ha, you know not." But Vytal had risen, and the sword-hilt was a magnet to his hand. "Nay, you go too soon," said Ananias, waving him back. "The plot I come to is of deeper import. I've been too garrulous—always so exceeding voluble, they say, with wine." Once more, with a strenuous effort after self-command, Vytal turned back to the table, pallid as death.

"She's different now—oh, sadly different—I think 'tis Master Marlowe, the poet, turns her head. I saw him with her, and she entranced. I'm no more to her than *you*. And she is most miserable. To-night she came and said: 'The voyage is very dangerous. Oh, would we'd never come!' 'Yes,' quoth I, ''tis even more dangerous than you think.' 'Oh,' said she, with a scorn that's hers alone, 'you are drunk,' but I assured her 'No,' and hid the cup like this beneath my hands. Oh, why do I care, why do I care when she sees the wine?" The maudlin remorse came into his voice again and into his watery eyes. "'What mean you?' she asked, 'by more dangerous?' 'Oh, the pilot will run us into Portugal,' said I. 'How comical! And there'll be twenty men on deck before the dawn to do it. 'Tis most extraor'nary!'"

At this Vytal started again to his feet. "Wilt swear it?" he demanded, fiercely. The drunkard leaned back and stared at him, seeming for the first time to strive for a sober moment.

"Nay."

"How do you know it, then?"

The vague eyes blinked with a more definite consciousness than heretofore. "I heard them plotting."

"And will not inform us on your oath. Then you

jeopard your own safety, Master Dare. Silence now is culpable, treasonable."

"Oh no, no—what a mad boat—rolling about so—I, treasonable; how strange! Then I'll swear, an you will, 'twas the pilot."

"You'll swear?"

"Most certainly, I'll swear."

"Where are the twenty men? Do you know that?"

"Nay, how should I know?"

"Did you not overhear the pilot give directions? Think you they are in the forecastle?"

"No, not there—not by any means there."

"In the hold, then, hiding?"

"Ay, that's it. In the hold. Down in the dark hold—oh, 'tis most uncomfortable in the hold—what a mad boat—rocking so—always rocking. 'Sdein! Where's the tankard?" Rising unsteadily, he looked about on the table in stupid surprise, then, sinking back again, missed his chair and fell heavily to the floor. "Ah, 'tis here, the wine—such brave wine!" and, crawling forward on his hands and knees, he sat down half under the table, holding the tankard to his lips. "Such courageous wine!"

Vytal went to the cabin door. "Heaven guard her," he prayed, and hastened to the stern. Here he found the pilot and Marlowe. With a gesture, he drew the poet aside, and in a few words made known the truth.

"'Tis against great odds," observed Marlowe, his eyes lighting up, "that we fight again together."

"Nay," declared Vytal, "there shall be no fight. Wherefore desecrate a rapier with so niggardly a foe?"

Marlowe smiled. "The bodkin would fain stitch only satin doublets," he remarked. "How, then, will you defeat these hirelings?"

"Thus," and leading the way to the forecastle, the soldier emitted a short, low whistle in one note. Soon Roger Prat stood before them.

"He comes like a devil from a stage-trap!" observed Marlowe, in astonishment.

Roger laughed proudly and bowed like a juggler after the performance of a cunning trick.

"Tell Hugh," said Vytal, in a short whisper, "to overpower the pilot when again I whistle thus, and with a stout rope to make fast his arms; but first procure another helmsman you can trust. For your own part, go to the hatches above the hold. If the pilot gives outcry, and his crew strive to pass you, warn the first man whose head appears, and if he heed not the warning, run him through. They can come but singly. 'Tis within your power to withstand them all."

"Of a verity, captain, well within it; but the work is tame. They stand no chance."

"Mark you, no bloodshed if you can help it. And tell Hugh the same. At the sound of the whistle, then, some time before daybreak."

"Thank you," and Roger went his way.

"Wherefore does he thank you?" asked Marlowe.

"Oh, 'tis ever so; a thousand thanks when I give him work like this to do." And for a moment the eyes of both followed Prat, whose rotund figure could be seen beneath the ship's lanthorn. He was walking on tiptoe, which gave him a grotesque appearance, and the end of his long scabbard was just visible as he held it out behind him to prevent its chape from dragging on the deck. "A peculiar fellow," remarked the poet, to whom all men were books demanding his perusal.

"A man!" said Vytal. And they waited for many minutes in silence.

"Let us make sure," suggested Christopher, at last, "that the men are in their places."

Vytal turned to him with a look of resentment, or, more accurately, an expression of wounded pride. "You know them not."

"Yea, well. But plans miscarry."

"I repeat, you know not the men;" with which, as though to deride the other then and there with proof of his absolute reliance, Vytal whistled the short note shriller and louder than before. Even as it died away there came a deep oath from the stern and a sound as of metal clanking on the deck. In another second there was a pistol-shot, then a desperate silence. "Let us hasten," cried Marlowe, "to their assistance!"

"Nay, let us rather go and question the prisoner."

This expression of confidence was fully repaid by the sight that met their eyes. For there on the deck, near the helm, flat on his back, lay the bulky pilot, so bound with a rope winding from head to foot that he could not move so much as a finger in remonstrance. As Vytal and Marlowe arrived on the scene, Hugh Rouse, smiling broadly, held a light over the prone figure as though to exhibit his handiwork. "A ceroon of rubbish," he said. "Shall we cast him into the sea?"

"Nay, let him lie here."

Vytal turned to the pilot's substitute at the helm, who had come thither at the request of Roger Prat. "Loyal?" he queried, taking the lanthorn from Rouse and holding it high, so that the rays fell athwart the new steersman's face.

"Ay, loyal; the fly-boat's mate, sir, at your service."

"What proof?"

"None, save this," and leaning forward he whispered the name "Raleigh" in Vytal's ear.

"Your own name?"

"Dyonis Harvie."

"He speaks truth," exclaimed Vytal, in an aside to Marlowe. "Sir Walter Raleigh made mention of the man." Then turning to the mate again: "To Roanoke we go. Here is a copy of Ferdinando's chart. You are master now. See you pilot us safe and sound to the good port we started for. Heed no contradictory orders. I am Captain John Vytal an you need proof of my authority."

Harvie's honest face lighted up on hearing this, his sunburned brow clearing with relief. "Sir Walter Raleigh bade me seek you, captain, in case of need. 'Tis well you come thus timely."

Vytal turned back to the prisoner. "Have you aught ready in extenuation?"

The pilot's eyes opened slowly while he looked up for an instant at his interrogator with sullen hate in every lineament of his mottled face. Then his eyes, blinking in the light, closed again, and his lips tightened to lock in reply.

Vytal turned away indifferently. "And now to Roger at the hatches; but do you, Hugh, stay here and guard the pilot," whereupon he led the way toward the hold.

"'Tis strange," observed the poet, "that we heard no sound from Roger Prat." But Vytal, making no reply, went forward, without so much as quickening his pace.

Coming to the hatches, however, they found no one, only a deep murmur of voices greeting them from below.

"Ah," said Marlowe, who could not suppress a small show of triumph on finding the other's surpassing confidence seemingly misplaced, "I said 'twould be well to make sure your orders were ful-

filled." And then, as the gravity of the situation grew more apparent to him: "Forgive me; 'tis ill timed. I fear the good fellow has come to harm."

But Vytal only laughed a short, easy laugh. "I repeat once more, you know not the man. Throw open the hatch. On guard!"

With only the delay of a second in which to unsheath his sword, Marlowe obeyed; and the dull murmur of voices grew louder as it rose unimpeded to the two above. But no one appeared in the hatchway.

"They lie in wait to entrap us," opined the poet, and then, with a hand on Vytal's arm: "Stay, I pray you! It means certain death!" For the soldier had stepped forward as though to descend.

Vytal smiled. "That night on the bridge you counted not the cost. Your impetuosity, methought, was gallant as could be. I go alone, then."

"Nay, nay, I stand beside you. Know you not that Kyt Marlowe is two men—a dreaming idler and a firebrand as well? Cast the firebrand before you, an you will. 'Twill burn a path for you, I warrant," and with that the poet, now all impulse, leaped toward the hatchway, brandishing his sword. But this time Vytal's was the restraining hand.

"No; I but tried you. We are none of us to be caught in a stupid snare, if snare it be." And bending over the hold, to Marlowe's astonishment, he called for Roger Prat. Then, to the poet's still greater amazement, Roger's head appeared in the opening, and a fat finger beckoned Vytal still closer to the hatch.

"All's well, but show no mistrust of them;" and then aloud, that the men below might hear him, "Ay, Captain Vytal, 'tis Roger and many others at your service, eager for the fray;" whereat, looking back

down the ladder, Prat called to the men to follow him. In a moment a motley company, of perhaps twenty, were standing on the deck, ranged in a group behind their spokesman. There were soldiers here, armed with pikes and bearing for defence leathern targets on their arms. There were mariners, too, with dirks and pistols.

"We are ready, you see," observed Roger, with a covert wink. "Ready and eager to defend the ship."

"Brave men all," said Vytal, masking his contempt with a look of gratitude. "I thank you. But it is too late. The rank treason is already thwarted, the pilot a captive, to whom justice shall be meted out in no small measure. You have lost the chance to fight, but your desire, believe me, shall not soon be forgotten."

There was a double meaning in the last words that caused many an eye to seek the deck confusedly. "'Twill be well," resumed Vytal, with a look at Prat, "to leave your arms here in case of another fell attempt to surprise us. Perchance you might not hear the alarm, and so your weapons, were they with you, would be lost to us. Here we can give them to the hands of those who hasten first to the defence. I bid you good-night."

One by one the men, not without hesitation, laid down their arms. It was the only chance they had to prove their good faith, and Roger Prat, as though to vindicate his own position, unbuckled his great scabbard with much ado and laid it down beside the rest. Then the men turned upon their heels and dispersed sheepishly, Roger, to maintain his rôle, going with them to the forecastle.

"Now," observed Vytal, turning to Marlowe, "you know my men at last."

"But I do not understand—" began the poet.

"Nay, not the details. Nor I. He will explain later; see, he returns even now to do it," and Roger Prat stood once more before them. He was holding his sides and shaking with silent laughter, after the repressing of which he told an extraordinary tale.

"I heard the whistle," he said, "and stood on guard. Master Pilot, being bound, I now suppose, by Hugh, could give no outcry save one of much profanity. But then a pistol-shot rang out, and I started forward a pace with some alarm. No doubt it grazed Hugh's elephantine ear. A stimulus—a mere stimulus! But as I started forward—and for that step, captain, you should put me in irons, I do assure you—as I started forward carelessly, the hatch was flung open, and, before I could turn, I was seized from behind. I thought Roger Prat was then no longer Roger Prat, but Jonah ready for the whale. Yet I struggled, and being, as you know, of some bulk and weight, succeeded in pushing my captor backward to the hatch. The next instant one of us tripped, and I found myself bounding downward along the ladder, at the bottom of which, thank Heaven, I lay down comfortably on the man who had fallen behind me. For him 'twas a less desirable descent." And again Prat shook convulsively with laughter, his elbows out and hands pressed close against his sides. "And then," he resumed, with an air of bravado, "I overcame the score."

"Overcame the score!" exclaimed Marlowe.

"With wits, Master Poet. 'Slid!' cried I. 'Why treat a comrade thus? In the name of Sir Walter, 'tis most unreasonable.' 'Which mean ye?' they cried. 'There are two Sir Walters!' 'Sir Walter St. Magil, of course,' said I. 'Here I come from the *Admiral* to give ye aid, and find myself hurled headlong to the nether world. The pilot's killed, the plan

defeated, and now we are like to decorate the yard-arm. There's forty men concealed on the orlop deck, awaiting us unkindly.' At this 'twas all I could do to look mournful and keep from laughing outright, for the knaves fell back terror-struck and babbled their fears to one another. Then I hung my head as if in thought. 'I have it!' cried I, at last; 'we'll play the part of brave defenders. There's one trusts me, for I gained his confidence at St. Magil's suggestion. 'Tis Captain John Vytal, the devil's own.' (Oh, forgive me, sir, for those dastard words. Yet they added force to my parley.) 'A ready-witted fellow,' I heard one say, and ' 'Tis a chance,' remarked another gull. Thus they assented, and we have twenty brave souls, Captain Vytal, new recruited. Hang them, I say. Hang the lot at sunrise, except one, and him you cannot. 'Tis the one I landed on in my descent. His neck is broke too soon and cheats the gallows. Forgive me for that—oh, forgive me for that. Ha, 'twas a comical proceeding." And again the fit of merriment seized him, exhaustingly, so that at last, for very mirth, he sat down on the deck, laughing until it pained him and the tears rolled down his rubicund cheeks.

The laughter, being of the most contagious, irresistible kind, spread to Marlowe. "Thy mirth," said the poet, "is like to an intrusive flea. It invades the inmost recesses of our risibility, and tickles us into laughter."

The sun, just peering over the horizon, saw an unusual sight across the water. First, a man in the stern of a solitary ship bound like a bale of cloth and propped against the bulwark under the eye of a giant who yawned sleepily, and, stretching a pair of great arms abroad, spoke now and then in monosyllables to a robust seaman on duty at the helm; then, a cor-

pulent soldier, shaking like an earthquake, and sitting on the deck amidships, his short legs wide apart; next, a face of sensitive poetic features not made for humor, but now submitting to it as though under protest, yet very heartily; and, lastly, the tall, stern figure of an evident leader, who stood near the others, but seemingly aloof in thought, being, for some reason, little moved by the gale of mirth.

The dawning light of the next day showed a picture widely different in conception.

CHAPTER VI

"Die life, fly soul, tongue curse thy fill, and die!"
—MARLOWE, in *The Jew of Malta.*

THE trial of the pilot for the instigation of mutiny was conducted in the fly-boat's main cabin with strict secrecy, in order that faint-hearted ones might be spared the disheartening anxiety which a knowledge of the conspiracy would have brought to them. The ship's commander, Captain Pomp by name, who had appeared greatly flurried and genuinely amazed on hearing Vytal's story, presided at the inquiry. Beside him at the long table sat Vytal on the one hand and Ananias Dare, now sober but forlorn, on the other.

The pilot, brought in by Hugh Rouse, came stolidly, without a struggle, and during the trial faced his judges with defiance, turning now and then an expectant look on Ananias Dare. For, preceding this investigation, the assistant had gone to the deck at sunrise and held a conversation in whispers with the guilty man, telling Hugh, who would have questioned his authority, that he but sought to elicit further information from the captive. What he had actually said was this: "An you betray me, we're both lost. Make no accusation at the trial. Even though I testify against you, I will save you in the end."

But the pilot's eyes gazed at him with little trustfulness. "You swear it?"

"I swear it."

"So be it, then. But at the last an you fail me, Master Sot, look to your own salvation."

The trial proceeded in a perfunctory manner, and would have been but a routine affair save for the increasing nervousness of Ananias, who concealed the cause by holding both hands to his head as though only the night's intemperance had unstrung him; and by the sudden appearance of Roger Prat, who, with the captain's permission, held a whispered conference with Vytal. "I pray you, captain, make no charge against the others. I have charmed them with a flute and tabor. They are hot against the pilot, being but hirelings, and, like sheep, easily led. We can count our force the richer by a score. 'I have saved your necks,' said I, 'and have talked with Captain Vytal. An we oppose him we surely dangle from the yard-arm. Welladay, welladay, I know what I know,' and I sang them a song, then played at dice, and lost three angels a-purpose, then drank and warmed their chicken hearts. In another week they will be ready to die for us," and, making a grimace at the sullen pilot, as who should say, "Be more cheerful, sir," Roger swaggered from the cabin.

On the testimony of Vytal, who told of St. Magil's conversation with Ferdinando concerning his bribe to the pilot, and on the oath of Ananias Dare, who testified to having heard the defendant plotting with St. Magil, the culprit was speedily condemned. The pale face of Dare, the faltering voice, the nervous effort with which he forced himself to stand erect while bearing witness, were readily set down to his bibulous tendencies, already well known to the fly-boat's captain.

In a grandiose manner Captain Pomp arose and drew himself up to his full height.

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"Incarcerate the prisoner," he said to Rouse, "in the hold. At midnight I shall send for him. Our sentence is that he shall be hanged at the yard-arm until dead." Whereupon, with an important air, not devoid of true dignity, he bowed to Vytal.

"It is well," said the soldier. And the three judges filed slowly from the room.

At the hour of midnight, when the voyagers were sleeping in their cabins, a sailor appeared in the hatchway of the hold, and soon the pilot stood beneath the main-mast, guarded by two dusky figures with drawn swords. A third approached him gravely. It was the Oxford preacher, offering consolation. But his offices were undesired. The pilot greeted him with a low curse, then laughed scornfully.

Vytal, who had come hither, realized the stubborn nature of the condemned man, and drew the pastor aside.

The moon, now full, had risen high, eclipsing with her brilliancy a host of stars. The sea lay glassy, a pool of shining mercury, its currents gliding on in silence, faster than the ship herself. The stillness was profound, broken only by the far-off cry of an unseen gull.

The night was a night for serenades of love, for lutes, for ardent whispers, for anything but work like this.

The noose was thrown over the pilot's head carelessly, as though the sailor were casting a quoit upon a peg. The captive opened his lips as though to speak, but the rope was tight-drawn, and the effort ended in a gulp, vainly. Suddenly there was a guttural, inarticulate cry, a choking sound, and a bulky form went up half-way to the yard-arm. In that instant, hurrying, uncertain footsteps scraped along the deck, and Ananias Dare reeled into the silent circle.

He gesticulated and moved his arms, striving to point steadily at the swaying figure in the moonlight. But he uttered only a gibberish of broken, unmeaning syllables, and then, lurching to the bulwark, went deathly sick in unrestrainable nausea.

The figure above, still rocking slightly from the upward swing, held out a thick forefinger and pointed to the new-comer, while a smile, ghastly in the moonshine, and triumphant even in the last agony, crossed its bestial face.

Vytal turned and looked at Ananias, who was now but a mumbling, terror-stricken heap upon the deck. Vytal had looked at the man before, but now for the first time seemed to gaze *into* him.

"Ugh!" muttered Roger Prat, shuddering. "Goodman Thong did his work well, but the pilot has done his duty even better."

The sun, several hours later, peering through the grayness, saw a heavy thing, limp and motionless, depending from the yard-arm of a lonely ship. It was a man of revolting countenance, black from strangulation, and pitted with the marks of a disease, Over the brow a shock of coarse red hair hung in strands like streaks of fire, and from the chin a ruddy beard flared across the chest. On one of the broad shoulders sat a great white gull, its beak buried in the flame.

But soon a sailor appeared on deck, whistling cheerily in the morning watch. He cut the thing down, and, grumbling over its weighty bulk, cast it headlong into the sea.

CHAPTER VII

"What shall I call thee? brother?"
—MARLOWE, in *Tamburlaine.*

THE voyage of the fly-boat proceeded thenceforward more uneventfully. The men who had been planning insubordination, now that their ringleader had been so summarily disposed of, changed their front and avowed themselves genuinely the followers of Vytal and the captain. For this transition Roger Prat, winning them with his humor and good-fellowship, was largely responsible, and after his own humbly boastful manner took no care to conceal the fact from Rouse, whom he loved in a railing, mocking fashion.

Vytal and Marlowe were much together, the dull days affording them the chance for many conversations, by the aid of which their intimacy grew and deepened into a strong friendship. There was that in the poet which appealed to Vytal—the facility of expression, the fervor and the impetuosity, all of which his own nature had lost in the grim realities of war and privation. Also, there was sometimes a profundity in Marlowe's thought which touched his silent depths.

Neither of the two saw Eleanor Dare again while on the voyage, save for an occasional glimpse of her, when, with her maid-servant, who was the wife of Dyonis Harvie, she came upon the deck for a breath of air.

Ananias approached the two men now and then with whispered protestations of his innocence, that grew more calm and earnest in his sober moments. Finally, however, he vaguely confessed a slight complicity, to Vytal only, and followed the acknowledgment with a convincing assurance that at heart he had ever been loyal to his father-in-law, Governor White, and to Sir Walter Raleigh. Vytal, hiding his contempt, received this assertion with a promise to leave the matter as it stood so long as there were no signs of further culpability, and gave the assistant his hand with a strong effort. He then instructed his men to preserve a like secrecy.

For many weeks the ship pursued her solitary course without once sighting the *Admiral*. It was feared by many that Ferdinando's vessel had met some misfortune, and foul play was suggested by but a few of the most suspicious voyagers.

Only one incident in all these weeks seems worthy of record.

Vytal was standing alone at mid-day, down on the orlop deck, examining the ship's cables and spare rigging, when a light footstep, almost inaudible, approached him from behind. Turning, he saw the Indian, Manteo, who, it will be remembered, was returning to Virginia after a stay of several years in England. He held a finger to his lips and looked about him cautiously. "We are betrayed," he said, in a low voice, "by the son of a warlike country. Ferdinando leaves his children to perish. The great ship seeks us not, but would make her way to my land alone."

Vytal scrutinized the impassive face for the first time with a deep interest. He had seen the Indian's tall figure, now and again, standing silently aloof in the bow, his dark eyes always gazing off to the west-

ward. But until now he had not seen those eyes alert and troubled, the supple form prescient with meaning.

"What brings you this suspicion, Manteo?"

"I know it as birds know that winter comes, as vultures that a warrior is dead."

There was a marked similarity in the bearing of the two men. They were both tall, dignified, and slow to speak, both evidently perceptive, strong, and masterful, both almost childlike in their direct simplicity. Perhaps each realized the likeness, for into the eyes of both there came a look of understanding that gave promise of a bond between them stronger than the stout cables the one had been examining, stronger even than the other's ties of blood.

"My brother," said Manteo, at length, "you, too, know the truth, but in a different way. I came to thy country as Master Barlow's interpreter, many moons ago. I return to my people, but I have learned among thine to interpret more than words. Thus, and by my own heart, I know that we are left behind. I have spoken."

"You have spoken no lie."

"I am Manteo, and lie not."

"My brother," rejoined Vytal, "listen." And he told the chief the tale succinctly, omitting only the complicity of Ananias Dare. "An you learn more," he said, in conclusion, "you will tell me, I trust, and none other."

"Only to thee have I spoken, or shall speak. For thou art a chief, as I am, among men."

There remains no more to be told concerning life on the fly-boat. As to the voyage of the *Admiral*, it is recorded on accessible pages of history. An excerpt from these may not be inadmissible as a record of bare fact. In the journal of John White, the

colony's governor, we find the following true description of the voyage:

MAY.

The sixteenth, Simon Ferdinando, Master of our *Admiral*, lewdly forsook our fly-boat, leaving her distressed in the bay of Portugal.

JUNE.

The nineteenth we fell with Dominica, and the same evening we sailed between it and Guadaloupe.

* * * * * * *

The twenty-eighth we weighed anchor at Cottea and presently came to St. John's in Mosquito's Bay, where we spent three days unprofitable in taking in fresh water, spending in the mean time more beer than the quantity of water came unto.

JULY.

* * * * * * *

About the sixteenth of July we fell with the main of Virginia, which Simon Ferdinando took to be the Island of Croatan, where we came to anchor and rode there two or three days: but finding himself deceived, he weighed, and bore along the coast.

The two-and-twentieth of July we arrived safe at Hatarask. . . .

The twenty-fifth our fly-boat and the rest of our planters arrived all safe at Hatarask, to the great joy and comfort of the whole company: but the Master of our *Admiral*—Ferdinando—grieved greatly at their safe-coming: for he purposely left them in the bay of Portugal, and stole away from them in the night, hoping that the Master thereof . . . would hardly find the place, or else being left in so dangerous a place as that was, by means of so many men-of-war, as at that time were abroad, they should surely be taken or slain, but God disappointed his wicked pretences.

Here the account of the days at sea ends. Thus the fly-boat, thanks to the watchfulness and care of Dyonis Harvie, came at last to her haven.

CHAPTER VIII

"Triumph, my mates, our travels are at end."
—MARLOWE, in *Dido, Queen of Carthage.*

THE landing and unlading of the fly-boat was a task requiring much exertion. But now that the dangers of the ocean were past, every man, woman, and child of the little colony lent aid with a hearty will. They were in high spirits. The mid-day sun shone down in summer warmth, the skies were blue and cloudless. The island of Roanoke, emerald green in all its summer verdure, seemed a veritable land of promise. A number of the most youthful colonists ran along the shore to prove their freedom from the confines of the deck—ran, calling to one another, and sang for sheer happiness. Others, more devout, gathered about the preacher, who offered a prayer of thanksgiving. Some, with whom labor was at all times paramount, went busily to and fro in the small boats and the pinnace, which had again been manned, conveying the cargo from ship to shore. The main body, who had arrived earlier on the *Admiral,* came down with tears of joy in welcome, and a babble of questions concerning the fly-boat's voyage. The scene was varied. Here stood Hugh Rouse with a great bag of salt on his broad shoulders; here Roger Prat, arm-in-arm with his newly regained friend, the bear, and pointing at Rouse with some remark to King Lud of raillery; here Marlowe, the poet, surveying with eager eyes the

luxuriant foliage farther inland and listening with enthralment to the songs of forest birds; there Gyll Croyden running toward him joyously, with a fresh-plucked nosegay of unknown, fragrant flowers in her hand; here Ananias Dare overlooking a couple of sailors who rolled a cask of wine across the beach; there Simon Ferdinando, important with a hundred directions, and furtive as he glanced toward Vytal; here Governor White, for a moment leaving the management to his assistants, and here, too, beside him, his daughter Eleanor, her face pale as if with illness, her long cloak still about her. She was clasping his arm with both hands, as though to make sure of no renewed separation. "Father, I thank God we are once more together. The days were very long, and almost unendurable."

But there was no rejoinder, for John Vytal stood before them, with a question of evident importance on his lips. "Where is Sir Walter St. Magil?"

"In truth I know not," and the governor's kindly face turned to the men at work near by. "He hath gone out to the *Admiral,* perhaps."

Vytal left them with a grave, almost indifferent bow to Eleanor, and, boarding the pinnace, was about to return to Ferdinando's ship in quest of St. Magil; but he felt a hand on his arm drawing him gently backward, and, turning, he saw Manteo, the Indian, who drew him aside beyond a bend in the shore. "My brother, he hath gone."

CHAPTER IX

"From forth her ashes shall advance her head,
And flourish once again that erst was dead."
—MARLOWE, in *Dido, Queen of Carthage.*

VYTAL frowned and bit his lip. "When did he go, and whither?"

"When, I can say, for I have heard. It was yesterday, the day after the great ship and our father, the governor, came to Roanoke, before we ourselves arrived. But whither I know not, save that it was toward the great forest of the South."

"Alone?"

The Indian's brow clouded. "Nay, I grieve that he went with Towaye, my kinsman, who came from England on the *Admiral.* I await thy word to follow the trail by which Towaye, for some unknown purpose, guides thine enemy."

"I thank you, but I am glad that he is gone. He has no knowledge of the fly-boat's arrival, and thus will miscalculate our strength. He is bound, an I mistake not, for the Spanish city of St. Augustine. Is it not accessible from here by land?"

"It is," replied Manteo, "for men of a kindred race came hither that way at the beginning of the world, and were slain as foes. But the trail hides itself as the trail a dead man follows. It runs through an endless forest, our forefathers have said, and over the face of angry waters. The white man must be brave, though evil, and my kinsman but one of many guides.

For passing through Secotan, five-and-twenty leagues to the southward, they must go, with many windings, as serpents go, to the land of Casicola, lord of ten thousand. Also they must pass the Weroances, Dicassa, and Toupee Kyn, of whom our men know nothing save the sound of their names, which comes like an echo without meaning. And they will come to La Grande Copal, where there are stars in the earth your people call jewels, and buy with cloth."

Vytal's face grew more troubled as the Indian proceeded. "It is impossible that he has gone so far."

"Yes, but there may be yet another way. The river called Waterin* is a trail itself, leading perhaps to the Spanish towns."

Vytal seemed but half satisfied. "Are you sure he has left the island?"

"No, but I will see."

"Go, then, Manteo."

"I return not," said the Indian, "until I know," and in a minute he was lost in the adjacent woods.

For a week the foremost consideration in Vytal's mind, after the cargo had been landed, was to ascertain, if possible, the whereabouts of the fifteen men who, being the stoutest spirits of an earlier colony, had been left the year before to hold the territory for England. The inadequacy of this arrangement, by which a garrison that would not have sufficed to defend a small fortress was left to guard a boundless acquisition, is perhaps unparalleled in history. But to many of the newly arrived colonists the utter futility of the plan was not apparent. They had not yet experienced the desperate hardships of an infant settlement, nor realized the extent and latent ferocity

*It was a common belief of the time that a river ran all the way from Virginia to Florida.

of the savage hordes that overran the continent. Furthermore, the magnitude and nature of the territory which fifteen men had been appointed to hold was by no means appreciated. Nevertheless, in the minds of men who had played their games of life against odds and could justly estimate the hazards of existence, the likelihood of finding the little company seemed very small. Vytal, for one, felt far from sanguine, but the kindly, impractical governor, although he had already searched the whole Island of Roanoke in vain, still held out hope of ultimate success.

"I doubt not we shall find them yet," he said one evening to Vytal, "on some adjacent island."

The soldier shook his head. "Let us go once again and inspect the site of their settlement."

"It is a most dismal scene," declared the governor, leading the way to a road running inward from the shore. "But my men can soon make the place habitable."

"Habitable!" exclaimed a voice behind them; "'tis a perfect Eden," and the speaker joined them.

"Ay, Master Marlowe," returned the governor, glancing at the new-comer with a look of indulgent admiration. "But Eden is forsook."

"'Tis the old story," observed the poet, "of an enforced exodus, but wherein lay the fatal sin? Are birds evil? Nay, but their little fate in a falcon's guise destroys them."

The governor looked at him askance. "I have heard of your loose theology, sir, but pray you to restrain it here. We are a lonely people, and need God."

The poet made no answer. The unquestioning faith of men like Vytal and the governor—the faith direct, plain, and utterly free from the cant he hated—caused him at times to covet their deep simplicity; again, he would rail against religion, and wander with

vain eagerness through the mazes of a complex Pantheism. But at last, poetry, pure and undefiled by sophistries, would return to him with her quieting, magical touch, and restore the sunshine to his world. "Dreamed you ever of such verdure?" he said, at length. "Nature is prodigal here, a spendthrift in a far country."

They were now on an eminence dominating the bay and sea. Vytal stood still and looked inland, then turned and faced the water. He spoke no word, but only gazed off to the distant shore. At last, catching sight of the busy group beneath him, he turned again and rejoined the others. "He knows it all," thought Marlowe, "even better than I, yet says nothing."

The road, overgrown with weeds and scarcely visible in places, led them at last to a number of huts in a wide clearing at the north end of the island. Here a scene of decay and desolation met their eyes. The sun, now setting, shot long, slanting rays across the oval, as though to exhibit every detail of the picture in one merciless moment and then be gone. "'Tis an impious revelation," said Marlowe, glancing about drearily at the numerous deserted huts. "Look at that hovel; 'tis but the corpse of a house. And that! Its windows leer like the eye-holes of a skull. And this one, the least decayed. It stands to prove itself a home, with the mere memory of protection. How vacantly they stare at us, like melancholy madmen! Come, let us begone." He would have started back, but seeing that Vytal and the governor had not yet finished their more practical investigation, followed them in silence.

Most of the hovels had been torn down to within about eight feet of the ground. The small boards which had served to barricade their windows were

scattered about like the fallen slabs of graves, while here and there a door, evidently unhinged by violence, lay flat against the earth, as though, if raised, it would reveal the entrance to a subterranean vault. The roofs, which were but the ceilings of the first stories, yawned wide to the sky, save where a few mouldering, worm-pitted rafters deepened the inner gloom. Melons grew about walls and thresholds in rotting profusion, while a hoard of parasitic weeds and wild grape-vines ran in and out between the logs. Some of the cabins, having fared yet worse, were now but black heaps of charred timber, half covered with long green tendrils, as if the fingers of Nature were striving to drag them back to life. And near the middle of the clearing a large pile of logs, rafters, bricks, and stone blocks showed that a fortress had been razed to the ground.

The three men walked on with few words, until Vytal, standing at the margin of the oval, called Marlowe's attention to a narrow pathway almost concealed by shrubs and fallen leaves. It led through the dense forest. Impulsively, Marlowe started to follow it, but the governor would have restrained him. "Have a care, Sir Poet; mayhap this is an Indian trail, and leads to danger!"

"No," called Marlowe, who, unheeding the other's protest, had hastened along the path to a distance of several rods. "Come."

They followed him and, to their surprise, came presently out on a second clearing, much smaller than the first. Here a cabin, entirely unobservable from the main opening, stood more boldly than all the rest, despite its isolation. It was entirely encircled by trees, save on the western side, where a broad breach in the line of foliage admitted a flood of relentless sunlight.

The three men started forward eagerly, for this house might even then have contained a tenant. Its door was closed, its windows barred. The roof had not entirely fallen, for a willow's branches swept across it with a thousand restless whispers, as though to a being within. But here, too, lank weeds clawed the walls, and melons rotted before the threshold.

Vytal tried the door. It resisted his strong pressure. But Marlowe, raising to the level of his shoulder a large stone, not unlike a cannon-ball in shape and size, flung it against the oaken barrier. It crashed through a decayed board and fell inside, first with a dull thud, and then, as it rolled, a crackling sound like the snapping of dry twigs. Vytal looked through the aperture, but could distinguish nothing for the gloom, and Marlowe peered in with no better success. "It holds all the shadows of the forest in its heart," he said, thrusting a hand through the hole. "There is a bar of iron across the doorway." He dislodged the metal rod, and letting it fall, pulled open the door, whose rusty hinges creaked remonstrance as he entered.

Vytal and the governor, following him, found themselves standing on hard, cold earth, to which the stone and iron bar had fallen.

A sudden gust of wind slammed the door behind them. Vytal stepped back to reopen it and admit light into the gloomy interior, but the last rays of sunshine crept now almost horizontally through a rift in the western wall. "They desecrate a tomb," said Marlowe, "by revealing its contents. Look!" He pointed to a number of white streaks in a corner on the earth. The sunbeams frolicked across them.

"They are the bones of a fellow-creature," exclaimed the governor, leaving the cabin with horror.

He spoke truth. In the corner lay a man's bones, the skull, the body's frame, the limbs, all close together, but separate.

"There are two skulls!" ejaculated Marlowe.

"No; one is but the stone you threw." Vytal was not mistaken, for the stone had rolled among the white streaks, snapping some and crushing others to a powder that shone like phosphorus in the sunlight.

The two men turned away from the ghastly sight in silence, to survey the room. An old musket stood against the wall, its barrel poked through the narrow chink, peering out at the forest. A rusty pike lay near by, its long, wooden staff stretched out from the white finger-bones of its dead possessor.

The cabin was devoid of furniture save for a rough-hewn table and an upturned stool, about the legs of which the long sinews of a plant, having entered stealthily from without through numerous knot-holes, had twined themselves tenaciously.

But there were few weeds growing within the hovel, for the earth, like adamant, offered no fertility even to the rankest vegetation.

Suddenly the sunlight left the room, and a chilling miasma seemed to fill it. Marlowe shuddered. "Let us leave this grave. Its gloom gets into my brain. One man outlived his mates and dwelt alone in this vast country, daring to fight single-handed against Destiny—and this is the result—a few porous sticks bleached by the frivolous sunbeams, a delusive glow suggesting the divine spark—and oblivion!" So saying, the poet, wrapping his cloak closer about him, withdrew to the open air, where the governor, also dolefully affected, awaited him.

Vytal came out slowly. "He is accustomed to scenes of death," said the governor to Marlowe.

"Death, with all its grim carnality, has grown familiar in the years of war."

"Yes, but the gloom of the story is in his heart, beside which the shadows of the room are as nothing. He feels these things down deep, but is ever silent."

They stood on the edge of the glade waiting for the subject of their conversation, who was walking slowly around the cabin. "He looks for further traces of the lost men," remarked the governor.

"No, it is for some other reason." Marlowe was not mistaken, Vytal's close inspection of the hut's vicinage being from a widely different motive. Carefully he examined the glade's border on all sides. To the west he found a wide, natural avenue in the forest that lost itself in the purple distance; to the north, a dense jungle seemingly impassable for man or beast; to the east, a double file of oaks and elms, growing with some regularity on the brow of a low cliff, their trunks surrounded by a tangle of underbrush that rose to the height of several feet and fell away again, to ramble through long grass in all directions. Being tall enough to look over this wild hedge-row, Vytal could catch a glimpse of the sound beneath him, and, from a vantage-point where a dead oak-branch left the view unobscured, he could just distinguish the two ships riding at anchor, within musket-range of his position.

Turning then to the south side of the clearing, he came to a strip of woods, perhaps fifty yards in width, which separated the hut from the deserted settlement. Evidently satisfied by his observations, he rejoined his companions.

"With your permission," he said to Governor White, "I make this my dwelling-place."

The governor expostulated, being astonished at

the voluntary choice of so dismal and isolated a habitation, but Marlowe understood.

"I prefer it to any other," said the soldier. "Have you not yet suspected that we are likely to meet enemies here on Roanoke?"

"Nay, the chance is slight. Manteo and Towaye have assured me of their people's friendliness."

Vytal hesitated before he spoke again, but finally concluding that the time had come for his disclosure, made known the main facts tersely and without a word of incriminating testimony against the governor's son-in-law, Ananias Dare.

Governor White received the information in mute astonishment at first, seeming loath to believe that any of his followers had planned so base a conspiracy. But he had been aware before now of Ferdinando's untrustworthy character, and although the master had explained away his desertion of the fly-boat by asserting that its pilot knew the course, and had requested him not to shorten sail unnecessarily, the governor's first mistrust returned to him now with full force. "We must apprehend this Ferdinando, and bring him to justice."

"Nay, with your permission, I will leave him at large, yet watch him carefully. Men of his mould defeat themselves. By close surveillance we shall discover any mischief he may seek to brew among us. An open punishment would affright the fellows who, being but tools, were on the verge of mutiny. These men now are loyal enough, and, if well treated, will fight for us. Otherwise they might desert."

The governor's kindly face was now more grieved than angry. "I had not thought there was so caitiff a knave as Simon among our people. Think you Sir Walter St. Magil will return with a force to menace our little colony?"

"That is wellnigh certain, for St. Magil plays into the hands of Philip, King of Spain. The Spaniards would extend their possessions northward, and have found a friend to aid them. This man, believing he has decreased our numbers by one-half, has gone to inform his patron's subjects that we stupidly wait here to be killed."

"Whither has he gone?"

"That I cannot tell. At first I thought to St. Augustine, but the journey by land is very difficult. The Spaniards await him, for all I know, in a camp not half so far."

The governor, deeply troubled, cast about for the best method of procedure. "Would it not be well to pursue St. Magil, and overtake him if possible before he reaches his destination? I have heard that Indians are as quick and sure as hounds in a pursuit."

"No. It is best to drill each planter in the use of arms; then, when our homes are built, to fortify the town as best we may, and wait."

"But we shall suffer heavy loss, even though successful in the end."

"Not so much as if we run into a snare with no provision for defence. And we shall teach them a lesson."

"But at how great a cost to us? You, Captain Vytal, have not a child to consider. I have. She is a woman, brave, 'tis true, and stout of heart, but now not strong in body. You know my daughter, Mistress Eleanor Dare?"

"Yes."

"I should go down to my grave broken-hearted were harm to come to her."

"I understand."

"No, you cannot, you who talk of wars as pastimes, you who have no child to guard."

"I understand," repeated Vytal, breathing heavily, and Marlowe, to relieve the tension, declared fervently, "We will defend the women to the last man."

Vytal turned to him as though he would have asked a question, but looked away again in silence.

They were now nearing the workers on the beach, who made ready to return for the night to their cabins in the fly-boat and *Admiral*, where they were to sleep until the town had been rebuilt. Seeing the governor stop to speak with one of the assistants, Marlowe turned to his taciturn friend. "May I share that hermit's hut with you?"

"I would share it with no other," and Vytal looked down at the poet as at a younger brother. Marlowe's face brightened. He started ahead with a buoyant step. "Now we shall live together, a pair of barbarians, heavily armed against the world and waiting to see which must be the last man." He would have run on further in his reckless manner, but there came no response to the outburst of defiant enthusiasm. Turning to ascertain the reason, he was surprised to find that his companion, who had dropped behind him, was at this moment entering the woods in company with Manteo, the Indian.

"My brother, a tongue of smoke licks the sky far to the southward; yet the forest burns not; the smoke is from the shore."

"You think it is the camp of white men?"

"I do; for did I not see a ship asleep at anchor and the gleam of armor under a hill?"

A look of intense satisfaction crossed Vytal's face. "They are come," he said.

CHAPTER X

"As had you seen her 'twould have moved your heart,
Though countermined with walls of brass, to love,
Or at the least to pity."
—MARLOWE, in *The Jew of Malta.*

ON the third night following Manteo's return, Vytal and Marlowe were together in the secluded hut of their choosing. The cabin contained but one room, scantily furnished by two pallets of straw, a roughhewn table, a couple of chairs, and other bare necessities of a home's interior.

The weather was foul, the sky lowering. Occasionally a gleam of distant lightning shot through chinks in the hovel wall, straight across Vytal's face, as, deep in thought, he sat beside the table. A tempestuous wind, shrieking like a shrew in heated brawl, seemed bent on extinguishing a cresset which had been thrust between the logs, but succeeded only in causing the light to flare uncertainly, as though the torch were being brandished aloft by an unseen hand.

As the gale increased, Marlowe, who had been half reclining on his pallet in a dark corner, rose and peered out through the hole in the door which he had made with the skull-like stone. The aperture, jagged and splintered at the edges, had purposely been left uncovered, as the hut's original windows were still barred.

"I' faith, 'tis a murky night," said Marlowe, striving to determine the outlines of trees against the sky.

"This wind's a very nightmare to the woods." He turned slowly and sat down at the table. "'Tis well that most of the colonists have built and occupied their homes. Troth, I pity them who sleep aboard the ships at anchor."

Vytal inclined his head, and Christopher smiled comprehendingly. Eleanor, at least, was safe and unharassed—hence Vytal's unconcern. Mistress Dare, of whom lately they had seen nothing, was housed in the governor's new-built dwelling, beyond the strip of woodland whose high outline Marlowe had just found indeterminate between this cabin and the town.

But Gyll Croyden was still on board the *Admiral*. Marlowe remembered this, and his thoughts pictured vividly the two women in contrast—one, as he supposed, all content and comfort; the other at the mercy of every wind and wave that crossed her life.

Listlessly he toyed with a sheet of paper on the table, and, picking up a pen, dipped it in an inkhorn at his side.

"*Comparisons are odious*," he wrote, slowly, little dreaming that the words, born of that fleeting contrast in his mind, were to become proverbial the world over. But, on raising his eyes to Vytal's face, he found in the deep expression none of the odiousness of comparison, for in his friend's thoughts there was only one woman to be considered.

Again the poet smiled, as one who half gladly, yet half sadly, understands, and once more his reflections shaped themselves in words. He wrote, carelessly, "*Who ever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight?*" and, letting fall the pen, handed the paper to Vytal. The soldier read and re-read, but made no response whatever, for, even as his eyes were raised from the writing, his look changed suddenly, and Marlowe,

with astonishment, saw him gazing transfixedly toward the battered door.

As a dream comes in the night-time to recall the thoughts of day, so a face, seemingly visionary, appeared now to the two men. The jagged edge of the door's orifice framed it uncertainly, but the cresset's light fell across the features in vivid revelation.

Vytal's lips parted as though he would have spoken, but it was Marlowe who voiced the name.

"Eleanor—Mistress Dare!"

And now slowly, yet before the two could recover from amaze, the door was opened, and, like a white dove from the heart of the gale, Eleanor came within the cabin.

The door slammed, and then all was quiet, both men sitting spellbound, for a single glance had told them that she was walking in her sleep. Her eyes were open, but evidently unseeing, with that vaguely transcendental look of the somnambulist; and she was clad only in a white simar of silk. Her russet hair, with which the wind had rioted, hung in profuse disorder about her shoulders and beneath her throat, where now it rose and fell more gently with the undulation of her breast. Her hands, clasped before her, added an effect of rest to the blind bewilderment of her all-unconscious pose.

For a moment she stood mutely facing them and looking, as it were, through them to a limitless beyond.

Vytal rose. "Mistress Dare, I pray you—" but as the name Dare seemed to be borne in upon her mind she cried out terrifiedly, and, swaying, would have fallen, had he not supported her and led her to his pallet of straw.

As his hand touched hers, Vytal started. "She hath a fever," he said to Marlowe. "Do you seek

the chirurgeon. He sleeps on the *Admiral* to-night —also her tire-woman, Margery Harvie, at the governor's house."

Hastily Marlowe started out, and the two were left alone.

In silence, Vytal covered Eleanor with his cloak, then, kneeling beside her with all of a man's tender concern and helplessness, held her hand.

Her mind was wandering now, and she spoke brokenly. The torchlight revealed her expression to him, and every look betokened change of subject in her thoughts, or, rather, change of subconscious impression, for the words never forsook a central theme, around which her mind seemed to revolve in desperate fascination.

Occasionally a glimmer of the distant lightning fell across the listener's face, showing it tense and deep-cut with the lines of a new resignation.

"Oh, I am but a child," he heard her say, as her speech grew more coherent. "I pray thee, father, take me not to London . . . 'twill ne'er be the same to me as this . . . these vagrant flowers . . . they grow not thus in the streets of towns." Her voice was tremulous with tears. "Is't true, father, that the queen . . . hath sent for thee . . . oh, then, thou'lt go . . . I prove no hinderance . . . thou'lt go, and I'll play at happiness in London . . . 'Tis best." She paused and tossed feverishly on the narrow pallet; but at length, as Vytal's firm grasp seemed to comfort her, she lay quite still and spoke again. Several years had apparently elapsed in the life she was re-living. "Alack, I knew we'd find no content in London . . . What is't worries thee so, my father?" Suddenly a second cry escaped her. "What sayest thou? Her Majesty would have me married! . . . and 'tis the only way

. . . nay, nay . . . Will she not spare thee, father? Thou hast done naught amiss . . . 'Tis most unjust . . . Ah, nay, in troth, I cannot . . . yet 'tis all for thee . . . for thee . . . then tell her Majesty I will."

Her look changed, and she smiled sadly, as though resigned, a second person seeming to enter in upon her dream. "Ananias, it shall be as you desire . . . If thou'lt rest content with friendship for a time, perchance in the coming days I'll learn to love thee, cousin, but now I cannot . . . My father alone is in my heart."

She broke off abruptly and grasped Vytal's hand, as though upon that grasp depended her salvation from a fate far worse than death. Evidently behind all the foremost people of her delirium a dominant personality influenced her mind—the same personality, perhaps, whose thrall had in some strange way drawn her to the cabin. And now she fell to sobbing, sobbing in anguish, and her helplessly childlike expression tortured Vytal's soul. "Oh, Ananias, I knew not of this great weakness . . . I reck'd not against thy love of wine . . . God pity me . . . "

Then for long she lay moaning and whispering inarticulately, Vytal kneeling beside her, scarcely more conscious than herself. The wind, subsiding, wailed about the cabin, leaving the torchlight steadier within. The damp earth, as yet unfloored, lent to the room a tomblike chill, and leaves rustled across the rafters.

Eleanor, turning restlessly, gazed into a dark corner, as if yet another figure had defined itself amid all the complexity of fevered thought. "Margery, I must tell thee," she said, with the impassivity of one who has no interest in life. "I am with child."

Then again all was silent save for the low moan

and whisper of the wind as it died slowly in the forest.

Vytal rose and went to the door, acutely realizing that to remain longer beside the bed and hear these words of a breaking heart was not only to torture himself, but to profane the soul that, all unknowing, gave them utterance. "John Vytal, I love thee . . . thee only . . . always."

He trembled, then mechanically opened the door, passed out, and, closing it again, stood outside before it, fixed and rigid like a sentinel on duty. Only incoherent phrases came to him now, inarticulate and meaningless in language, yet fraught with so terrible a significance that he strove to force upon his mind a condition utterly devoid of thought.

But with Vytal this was ever impossible, and so at the last, with a great mental effort, he clutched at the consideration of outward and practical necessity. Would Marlowe never return with aid? He listened desperately for footsteps. Every slight rustle, every sound of wind and wood that came instead, filled his ears and brain, until all the world and existence seemed but a medley of sounds, trivial, but wonderfully important; low, but always audible and intently to be heeded in the night.

When at last he heard a footfall he realized dimly that this was not what he had expected; it was not from the woods, but from within the hut.

Slowly the door opened, and Eleanor stood looking into his face. Her eyes, though bewildered, were calm and recognizing, while her whole expression seemed indicative of consciousness regained. The somnambulism and delirium, not unnatural to one in her condition, had left her very feeble in body but mentally aroused. As Vytal realized this, the demands of the moment became paramount to him,

his own terrible lethargy being broken to meet her needs.

"Mistress Dare," he said, calmly, "I pray you rest here longer. I have sent for aid."

For a moment she made no response, but stood looking about her at the room's interior. The torch-light fell across a sheet of paper on the table. First a single written sentence met her eye:

"Comparisons are odious."

She shivered and would have turned away, but there was more writing, which seemed to speak to her, though she was not sensible of reading the lines, even to herself:

"Who ever lov'd that lov'd not at first sight?"

She looked from the table out into the darkness, and then at Vytal. "Oh, sir, tell me how came I hither—thus—at night!" She clasped his cloak tightly about her, leaning against the door-post for support.

"You have been stricken, madam, with a fever. I pray you rest."

At this a new apprehension came into her eyes. "Oh, John Vytal, have I spoken in feverish way? Tell me, tell me—"

A quick denial sprang to his lips. He believed that deception then would have been no lie, but to the man who had ever fought for truth, to the simple, direct nature, even that deception was impossible.

"You spoke, madam; yet, believe me, your words I shall withhold forever, even from myself."

Long they stood in silence, conveying no thought one to the other, by word, or look, or slightest gesture, their spirits, at the end of that silent lifetime, seeming to meet and become one; yet even in the instant of their acute conception of the union they stood apart, as if denying the bond.

Finally he saw her tremble, and a keen realization of her own despair rose above all thoughts of self. "Thank God," he said, "our colony hath need of us. There's work to do—not for me only, but for you."

Thereafter she passed him, inclining her head in vague assent, and with a strenuous effort started out in the darkness toward the gate of the main enclosure.

He could not follow, knowing that her silence prayed him to withhold assistance, yet every instinct fought against his self-control.

"I will send the chirurgeon," he said, "to your father's house."

CHAPTER XI

"Now will I show myself
To have more of the serpent than the dove;
That is—more knave than fool."
—MARLOWE, in *The Jew of Malta.*

EVEN the sanguine governor had by now given up all hope of finding any survivor of the fifteen men who had been left to hold the territory for England. The supposition became general that these unfortunates had been massacred by a tribe of hostile savages, known through Manteo as Winginas. The colonists were much surprised, nevertheless, when, on a day early in August, their suspicions were seemingly verified in an unexpected way.

In the afternoon Vytal sought Rouse at the fortress, which had been rebuilt.

"Where is Roger?"

"I know not," replied Hugh. "He is mad in this new country, more addle-pated than before. An hour ago I saw him leading King Lud away into the woods, and, following him, Mistress Gyll Croyden, after whom he runs nowadays as the bear runs after him. They went, I think, to speed some friendly Indians on their homeward way. But he is mad with his pipe and tabor, his cittern and King Lud. I fear in his wagging head there is no sense left."

Vytal smiled. He knew men. "Come, we will go in search of them. I must see Roger without delay."

They started out together on the trail the Indians

had taken, Vytal telling briefly of St. Magil's approach, and Rouse listening with more of satisfaction than alarm. At length, after a long walk, they heard the familiar notes of a flute gone wild, and pushing forward to an opening in the woods that bordered on the water, came within view of a scene that is wellnigh indescribable.

There, in the middle of the glade, sat Roger Prat on his tabor, piping for dear life, while Gyll Croyden flashed in and out amid the shadows in a dance even more fast and furious than the tune. But this was not all; for there, in ludicrous contrast, stood King Lud, the bear, facing her from across the sward, erect on his hind-legs and curveting clumsily about. His nose sniffed the air; his fore-paws dangled idly on his shaggy breast; but the bandy hind-legs danced with an awkward alacrity, while he shambled hither and thither as though on a red-hot iron. Again and again he revolved slowly in a cumbrous, rotary jump, maintaining his equilibrium with the utmost effort of ponderous energy. And still the flutist played his rollicking tune, the romp of the notes accompanying occasional outbursts of musical laughter and warbled catches from Mistress Croyden's lips.

Mistress Croyden herself was undeniably the life and key-note of the extravagant orgie, dancing, and dancing as only impulse led her, in utter *abandon* and unrestrainable liberty of motion, until her little feet sped to no tune, but outstripped Prat's endeavors—madly, riotously leaped, tripped, pirouetted, glided, and were never still. She whirled first, then ran forward as though on wings, then, bending low in mock courtesy to her bulky partner, receded as if to vanish in the air. Her curls, tumbling about her shoulders, shone like gold in the sun's last rays; her velvet cap had fallen to the ground as though it,

with decorum, had been thrown wildly to the winds.

She had not seen Vytal and Rouse, who held back within the wood, but the sight of a long row of dusky faces looking at her wonderingly from the water's margin seemed only to increase the madness of her dance. The Indians stood near their canoes, spell-bound before departing. Indeed, they could not depart until this preterhuman apparition, with its phantom bear and spirit of a woman, had dissolved, as it surely must, like a dream.

Suddenly, obeying some new whim, Roger slackened the speed of his Pan-like music and subdued the strains to a more pensive melody. In perfect accord with the change, Gyll Croyden fell to a slower motion, a dance no more definite, but only less eccentric and vivacious. With a sensuous, mystical step she seemed to sway and flow into the heart of a new song that her bird's voice lilted softly, and she looked no longer at the bear. As if resenting this new indifference, King Lud fell to his natural position with a growl, and, returning to Roger, sat disconsolate at the player's side. Then Gyll sank down breathless near him and used the shaggy shoulder as a cushion for support, her curls shining against the rough background of his coat, her song dying in a laugh.

She had no fear of the brute, for through all those days when his master had been unexpectedly absent on the fly-boat, she and she alone had ventured to attend King Lud, coaxing and scolding him into a condition of amity and servitude. As the pipe, with a wailing *finale*, became silent, Vytal and Rouse stepped into the opening.

Instantly Roger Prat, a somewhat sheepish trepidity in his bulging eyes, jumped up from the tabor,

and, thrusting the pipe with an obvious attempt at concealment into his belt, bowed low before them. "Thus," he ventured, waving his fat hand at the dark figures on the water's edge—"thus we tame the redskins."

"And a king," added Gyll Croyden, stroking the bear's nose with delicate fingers. She was looking down at King Lud, for somehow her laughing eyes persisted in avoiding the face of Vytal. Yet they were by no means bashful

Rouse looked down at Prat. "Vagabond," he muttered, under his heavy mustache, "Bubble-wit!"

But Roger only turned on the big soldier a glance of mimic scorn and commiseration, mumbling some retort, in which "Ox" and "Blunderbuss" were alone intelligible.

These courtesies were quickly interrupted by Vytal, who spoke a word or two in low tones to Prat. Immediately that worthy was transformed. His hand came forward from the flute to his sword-hilt. The merriment died out of his face, while a look almost stern and forbidding, yet, curiously enough, not at all incongruous, crossed his stubby features.

The Indians, one by one, withdrew to their canoes and vanished into the deepening darkness. The three soldiers and Gyll Croyden, turning their backs to the water, started homeward. But suddenly they heard a light, grating sound behind them on the shore, and a voice, calling to them in pure English, caused them to turn about again with extreme surprise.

A man, wearing a rusty steel corselet and bonnet, a sword, and shabby leathern breeches, was dragging a canoe onto the beach. Having drawn the prow with an evident effort to security among the weeds and tall grasses that lined the glade, he came staggering forward to the amazed onlookers, and crying

aloud, "At last! at last!" fell apparently lifeless at their feet.

Quickly, with a woman's eternal instinct, Gyll Croyden ran to the water, took off her neckerchief, wetted it, and returned to the prone figure with ready aid. Drawing off his heavy headgear, she then bathed the man's temples, and bidding Prat bring the helmet to her, filled with water, presently dashed the cooling liquid in her patient's face. "Poor boy!" she exclaimed, for the face, despite its full beard and long mustache, was very young.

Perhaps half an hour elapsed before signs of returning consciousness rewarded her efforts. Then, slowly, a pair of blue eyes opened and looked into hers, after which, painfully, the forlorn soldier stood upon his feet.

A volley of questions rose to the lips of Gyll and Roger; but Vytal, who had stood watching the mysterious stranger in silence, disappointed their curiosity.

"It grows dark," he said, addressing the youth. "An you, sir, can walk, we had best hasten to the town."

The other, seeming to have regained his strength with surprising suddenness, declared, "If it be not too far, I can accompany you with little aid."

"The darkness matters not," averred Prat. "See, I have brought a lanthorn." And, so saying, he lighted the sheltered candle with flint and steel. Handing the lanthorn to Gyll, who, like a will-o'-the-wisp, led the way into the forest, he then lent assistance to Rouse in supporting the stranger. For several minutes they followed the trail without speaking; but soon their ragged charge broke the silence. He spoke as though to himself, in a voice suggestive of vague reminiscence. Presently his words became

more audible, the broken phrases more coherent. "A year," he said—"a year in hell!" And then, in a clear, low tone, "There were fifteen men of us, just fifteen men, all damned save one."

"My God!" ejaculated Rouse, halting suddenly; and Roger, coming likewise to a stand-still, stood surveying the youthful, bearded face, with mouth agape in mute amazement.

Vytal turned, but, fearing to break the spell of memory, said nothing. And Gyll Croyden, who had half caught the meaning of the words, returned to the group with her lanthorn. Holding the light high, so that its dim rays fell athwart the stranger's face, she, too, gazed into the boyish blue eyes with wonder and impatience. As the features were thus illuminated, Vytal's expression changed. In a voice that surprised its hearers by an unaccustomed vagueness of tone, which matched in uncertainty the youth's, own accents, he demanded, slowly, "Your name, sir; first, your name."

The blue eyes met Vytal's look squarely, but, blending with their candor, a peculiar, veiled expression suggested to the keen observer an incongruous amusement.

"Ralph Contempt."

"Ralph Contempt!" echoed Roger, in an undertone. "It hath the sound of a stage conceit."

The stranger turned to him, smiling feebly. "You speak as though I had christened myself. Believe me, it is a miracle that I remember the name at all." His phrases became wandering again, and he passed a hand across his forehead. "Fifteen men," he laughed aloud. "Fifteen to guard the possessions of their gracious queen. Fifteen soldiers . . . very brave, I assure you . . . fifteen in the middle of hell . . . but so brave, mark you, that a horde of ram-

pant devils, with firebrands and a myriad whistling arrows, hesitated, really hesitated, in very fear before them. A thousand red demons . . . and, oh, what a song the weapons sang! It laughs in my ears even now." He smiled with a look that only intensified the horror of his words by its genuine gayety. "Fourteen men damned, dead and damned . . . worse yet, one man alive to be played with . . . oh, 'twas a merry game in hell! A game of pall-mall, a new kind of badminton . . . painted devils, you know, and then the toy, the ball, the shuttle-cock, the hobby-horse, call it what you will—that crawling thing in the centre, scorched and sore . . . behold, my masters, the toy!" He drew himself up to his full height and looked from one to another, laughing. With the exception of Vytal, the listeners could not but avert their glance—Hugh Rouse touching his brow significantly; Prat, with a grave nod, concurring in the verdict. Gyll Croyden turned away with tears in her eyes, and retraced her steps on the homeward trail. It was not until she had forgetfully left them in darkness, her light but a dim spark among the trees, that the others followed her. Vytal walked on alone in deep thought, the unfortunate bringing up the rear with lagging step between Prat and Rouse, who maintained a gloomy silence. Occasionally the youth would laugh, and, seeming to recall some incident of a terrible combat and captivity, would travesty the same with the inconsistency of dementia.

It was late in the evening when the little party arrived at its destination. A sentry, guarding the main entrance of the palisade, which by now had been completed, peered through a chink in the upright logs. Vytal, from without, uttered the watch-word, for the sentry's ears alone. Instantly they

were admitted, the guardian of the town's security glancing curiously at the unknown figure of Ralph Contempt.

"In the morning," whispered Prat, "you shall hear all." And turning to Vytal, he asked: "Whither, captain, shall we conduct the man? To a pallet in the fortress near our own?"

"Nay, he will perhaps fare better with me;" then, to the subject of their discussion, "I trust, Master Contempt, you will accept the hospitality of myself and one other for a day or two at least."

The youth bowed courteously. "I thank you," he said, and, with that laugh which seemed to deride Fate itself, or, perhaps more subtly, the listeners, he added, "'Tis desirable to be a guest now and then, instead of a plaything."

He went with Vytal to the secluded house beyond the enclosure. In the main room they found Marlowe sitting at a table, his arms thrown out over the rough pine top, his head resting on them in an attitude of sleep. A candle, sadly in need of snuffers, flickered across a page of manuscript that lay crumpled in his hands.

On hearing Vytal enter, the poet awoke slowly; but, seeing the face behind his friend, as it came within the candle-light, he rose from his chair with an exclamation of surprise.

"The sole survivor," announced Vytal, "of our fifteen men."

"What!"

"But a plaything," added Ralph, with a deprecatory wave of his hand. "A mere babery for naked red-boys."

Marlowe took up the candle and held it nearer the speaker's face. Then, with less surprise and more commiseration. "Forgive me," he said, "for my un-

mannerly welcome, but for the moment your features seemed familiar to me, as though I had seen them in a dream."

The new-comer returned his gaze with a dazed expression. "I *am* a dream."

The poet glanced at Vytal meaningly. "He needs rest; let him sleep on my bed. I will make a couch of grasses for myself."

When finally they heard the regular breathing of their guest, who lay comfortably on Marlowe's bed, Vytal told of the meeting on the shore and of Ralph Contempt's broken narrative.

"Poor devil!" mused the poet. "He whose bones we found scattered here was far more fortunate."

"I thought I knew this man's face," said Vytal. "'Tis strange that you, too, should have imagined a recognition."

"Nay, it was but the eyes that seemed familiar. Doubtless there are many like them of Saxon blue, blighted by the undue levity of a disordered brain. The fellow, most like, has been a wild thing, little better than a beast. Saw you ever such a growth of hair on head and chin?"

"No, it ill becomes the youthful face—the face—" Vytal paused and fell again to thinking.

"The face," echoed Marlowe, looking over to the sleeper. "Perchance we saw it before the man left England, before he came hither a year ago to meet his doom."

"It is probable," allowed Vytal; "if, indeed, we saw the face at all."

CHAPTER XII

That, like a fox in midst of harvest time,
Doth prey upon my flocks of passengers."
—MARLOWE, in *Tamburlaine.*

BY noon on the following day the whole colony had heard the tale of a desperate fight on this peaceful island, of an unimaginable, living death amid savage captors, and of a miraculous deliverance.

"He fought ten, single-handed, and so escaped," said one of the planters, joining a number of his companions, who were hastening toward Vytal's house.

"He was half roasted," declared another, shuddering, "and prodded with stones red hot."

"His house," asserted a third, "was burned to cinders while he defended it within this very clearing."

Throughout the whole morning small parties, thus discussing the subject, sought to gain a view of the man who filled their thoughts. Inquisitively they came and, looking in at the doorway of the cabin, surveyed the youth, who sat just across the threshold, mumbling to himself and bowing to them with a pitiable smile of welcome. Then, silently, they would return to their various labors, awe-struck and uneasy.

But at mid-day there was a larger gathering at Vytal's door. Ralph Contempt stood in the centre of the circle, describing rapidly his misadventures with a new grasp of detail and some continuity of incident. His mental powers had evidently been re-

freshed by sleep and sustenance; his memory now offered a more vivid and coherent depiction of the fight, bondage, and escape. His listeners, men and women, stood enthralled and terrified, the cold fingers of fear insidiously touching their nerves and heart-strings to play the shivering discord of alarm. Perhaps no instrument was more perfectly attuned to the notes of apprehension than the heart of Ananias Dare. He stood near the speaker, with an ill-disguised attempt to suppress the terror that, like an east wind, froze his marrow with an actual chill. He was entirely sober, and, therefore, completely unmanned. His face, pallid and tense, was yet beautiful, its terror strangely heightening the effect of beauty as though by a magic but despicable art. For the expression, emasculated by fright, was remembered long after by those who had read the reflection of its fear in their own hearts. The shallowest eye can express the deepest apprehension; the nature devoid of capacity for all other intense emotion, may yet be keenly and desperately subject to the power of fear. The study of cowardice reveals peculiar inconsistencies. For instance, here stood Ananias, a man of insignificant psychal stature, surpassing all his fellows in the height of his alarm. His eyes, often but vague films beneath the fumes of wine, were now clarified and made brilliant by the horror of their gaze.

And here, too, listening to the narrative of Ralph Contempt, stood Simon Ferdinando, a coward of another sort, with eyes more furtive and less intense, who seemed already to consider the question of escape, while the other only remained paralyzed by the menace of a danger that might at any time repeat itself. But Dare bore unmistakable traces even now of gentle birth and a lost manhood, whereas Ferdi-

nando appeared not unlike a frightened rat looking for its hole. The one inspired contempt and pity, the other contempt alone.

And the man who called himself Contempt wore an expression as he talked according well with the appellation. Directing his words and gestures toward these two, not pointedly, but in a subtle manner, he so worked upon them and all the others that, when his repeated story of the massacre was told and he paused breathless, a low, moaning sigh fell from many lips, like the wail of a night wind. Then suddenly Ferdinando cried out: "To the ships! To the ships! Must we, too, perish thus? Nay!" His voice rose to a high pitch. "To the ships and England!"

"Ay, ay," came hoarsely from the terrified group.

"Ay, away from this accursed country," said Ananias Dare, who at last had found voice to speak. But a new look, more pitiable than all the weakness of his first expression, crossed his face. "Yet, stay!" he cried, as though with a great effort, some latent nobility, the mere memory of a dead courage, asserting itself.

Ralph Contempt turned to the others as if he had not heard. "A huge devil," he resumed, "brained my sole surviving comrade with an axe of stone, whereat, dragging me by the hair, for I was bound by leathern thongs, he rolled me among the burning timbers of my own house. Next, another savage—" But he was interrupted by a second shrill cry from Ferdinando:

"Even now the Indians may be on their way; even now it may be too late!"

"Yes," moaned Ananias, his short-lived courage failing, "too late."

"To the ships!"

It was the voice not of one man but of all, while panic-stricken they turned and, with a rush, made for the main enclosure of the town. Only the youth, who had caused the stampede, delayed, and he, smiling, started to re-enter the hut. But on the threshold he paused and looked back again. For he heard a new voice rising above the clamor of his retreating audience, a voice that he recognized instantly. Seeing the men and women hanging back before Vytal himself, who had met them at the narrow opening in the palisade, he returned to the group leisurely, his eyes on the tall figure and stern face in the gateway.

"How now?" demanded the soldier, quietly. "What means this panic?" Not one gave answer. "What means it?" The words came more sharply than before. But still there was no response, each being ready to cast on his fellow the onus of explanation. And still they all hung back, their eyes cast down.

Vytal looked at one and another with an infinite scorn, omitting only the forlorn Ananias in his searching gaze; for a brief glance at the governor's son-in-law had shown him a figure of despicable shame.

"No man enters the town until the truth is told." And, drawing his rapier, he waited.

"The bodkin!" muttered Ferdinando, who, drawing back to the outskirts of the group, sought to hide himself from view. At that moment Ralph Contempt went to Simon and spoke a low word in the sailing-master's ear. Hearing it, Ferdinando started with an exclamation of surprise, and then, in evident relief, maintained silence, obedient to the other's mute command. On this the youth, sauntering unconcernedly toward Vytal, spoke that all might hear him:

"An none other can find his tongue, mine must needs confess itself guilty."

His manner became wandering, and he passed a hand across his brow. "The tongue is an unruly member . . . very mischievous . . . so mischievous that sometimes the painted devils put cinders on it, and the cinders sizzle to hiss its prayers."

Vytal scrutinized the speaker, first keenly, then with that look of bewilderment which not until lately had been seen in the soldier's face.

"These men fear a second massacre," added Ralph, more sanely, "and would return to England."

Vytal's expression went darker yet. "Fools!" he exclaimed, and then with less severity, as a grieved look came into his eyes, "I had not thought to find men turned to sheep—*men!*"

He emphasized the last word as though to convey its full meaning to their hearts. His face, resolute, fearless, but more sorrowing now than scornful, imparted some of its own courage to those about him. Ananias Dare, for one, seemed to have lost much of his fear. Vytal alone had the power to fortify his faint heart. In the soldier's presence he was a different man.

"I strove to stop them," he said, "but the effort was vain." Yet still Vytal withheld his look from the assistant, for this weakling, all unknowing, was the one man the mere sight of whom could cut him to the quick.

"You will return to your duty—*all!*" It was not a question, but a quiet, doubtless command. He stepped aside from the gateway. One after another they filed past him, each more eager than his predecessor to hurry beyond the paling and the captain's view. Ananias Dare and Ferdinando brought up

the rear of this ignominious procession, the one slowly, the other scurrying like a rat.

Within the enclosure they all separated silently, each seeming to desire a temporary solitude in the pursuit of his work.

"They would defend the town most gallantly against attack," observed Ralph, dryly.

"They *will*," returned Vytal, emphasizing the change of tense. "But your story is told. They have heard enough. You will strive to forbear hereafter."

The youth smiled. "Forbearance is my chief virtue," and he went away, leaving his host alone in the cabin.

As he walked through the woods he came to a narrow creek that ran inland from the sea; and, following this toward the shore, he chanced on a sight that caused him to stop and smile with genuine lighthearted boyishness. For there, in the middle of the shallow stream, her back toward him, stood Mistress Gyll Croyden, bending low over the water. In one hand she held a forked stick which now and again she darted viciously into the muddy bed of the inlet, while with her other hand she held her skirts above the knee.

"Is it possible," called the youth. "that even a crab is so heartless as to run away? Now, were I the crab—" but her expression, as she turned, brought another peal of laughter from his lips. "Yes," he said, "you are caught instead of the shell-fish."

At this the smile which had been rising to the surface of her eyes, whether she would or no, culminated in a laugh as merry as his own. She waded to the bank. "My patient is come to life at the wrong moment; but sit you down, pretty boy, and talk to

me. Well?" she said, dangling a pair of white feet in the sluggish stream—"Well?"

"What is the meaning of your expectancy?" he inquired, stretching himself at full length on the mossy ground. "You wait, I suppose, for a seemly expression of gratitude. Thank you, then," and, taking her hand, he kissed it lazily. But she was pouting. "Oh, I am wrong. What is it, then? Ah, I see. You wait to be told of your beauty, and how the sight of a maid crabbing is beyond description. Methinks there's another will tell thee that, and more besides. I saw the mountebank to-day ogling thee with eyes distraught and bulging."

Gyll laughed. "'Tis Roger Prat. He hath no thought o' me. He's all for the bear and Vytal."

"Ah, well," said Ralph, "thou'rt not so wondrous comely. I tell thee, wench, for all thy prettiness, there's one outshines thee as the moon a will-o'-the-wisp. Nay, look not angry. 'Tis the governor's daughter, Mistress Dare. I've seen her at her window thrice this very day. My heart goes wild of love for so fair a face, so unobtainable a damsel."

At this Gyll made a wry face. "Pah! she loses her beauty quickly. When we set out from England she was fairer far than now. I saw her go aboard at Plymouth."

"Ay," laughed Ralph, "she was younger, but her face lacked its present fire in the London days."

"What!" cried Gyll, "you saw her there?"

"Nay, nay," he returned quickly, "'tis a delusion of my addled brain."

She looked down at his incongruous beard, and then into the youthful eyes indulgently. "Poor boy!"

"Poor boy!" he echoed. "You call me nothing but 'poor boy.'"

"Nay, nay, your Majesty," she contradicted, mocking his assumed haughtiness. "When have I said such a thing before?"

"Was it not when I—" But Ralph hesitated. "Oh no, perhaps not," he added, quickly, and rambled back to the praise of her appearance.

"If your Majesty will permit me," she said, complacently, "I will pull on my stockings."

To this he made a strange rejoinder. "Mistress Croyden, you are a prophetess, a sibyl who reads the future."

She looked at him questioningly, with a kind concern, believing him again bereft of reason. "Because I predict the donning of my hose? Is it, then, so easy to be a prophetess?" She picked up a pair of red stockings and wound them about her fingers.

"Consider that the premonition an you will," he replied, knowingly. "'Tis perhaps as fruitful." He seemed to delight for the moment in propounding, by voice and look, an enigma. But in the next instant he meandered on after his usual manner, with flattery and idle jests.

In the evening, Gyll, meeting Marlowe in the town, pronounced Master Ralph Contempt hopelessly insane. "Or," she added, "a knavish actor, who demands more sympathy than he merits, for he heard me say 'poor boy' when we thought him lifeless in a swoon. But he is a 'poor boy' for a' that. Think of the tortures!"

Following this, three days went by without incident, and still Hugh Rouse and Roger Prat, stationed at the southern end of the island as outposts, gave no warning.

Vytal changed. His taciturnity, which had increased of late, was broken more often as the danger

became imminent. His impassive face, in which only Marlowe could read the quietude of self-restraint, grew eager with the anticipation of an actual, tangible conflict between right and wrong. Here was a condition all-absorbing, and, above all, a condition the soldier could meet face to face with comprehension. He could cope with *this*, at least. The spirit of action, always ready to assert itself in him, but sometimes of necessity repressed, finally had become paramount again, once more to resume full sway. His step became lighter, his deep blue eyes less cold, and many, noting the alteration, wondered, only the veteran soldiers and the poet dimly understanding their leader's change.

"My brother, they approach." It was the Indian who, having again reconnoitred, vouchsafed this information on the fourth day after the advent of Ralph Contempt.

Late in the evening, Vytal started homeward to seek Marlowe. The night was dark and still, as though Fate, with finger to lips, had set a seal of silence on the world, which the distant surf and a slow rainfall on the sea of leaves intensified monotonously. But a new sound suddenly broke the stillness. A cry, a single cry—plaintive, feeble, and unutterably doleful—then a silence even deeper than before. Vytal, pausing near the palisade, looked up at the dwelling of John White. A rabbit, startled by the sound of the cry, darted across his pathway into the woods. An owl, high above him, answered the voice with a wailing screech. A deer, that had been watching his approach beyond the gate, ran away timidly through the forest. He remembered all this long afterward—the white flash of the rabbit, the owl's response, the rustling of leaves as the deer withdrew.

He waited. Again the cry, louder, but none the

less pitiful and lonely. The muscles of his face grew tense, the veins big like whipcords. He turned, as though to lean against the paling, but then, as with a strenuous effort, refused even that support, and stood motionless like stone.

And now, as a side door directly before him opened, a flood of light fell across the pathway from within. It shone in a pool of rain at his feet, and played about his drawn face with profane curiosity. Ananias Dare stood in the doorway looking at him. But suddenly the assistant lurched back, and, snatching a silver cup from the table behind him, brought it out, with reeling, splashing footsteps, to Vytal.

"Drink," he mumbled, thickly. "Drink, good my captain, to the health of my first-born child! A toast, sir, to my daughter—a deep toast, a very deep toast—to the first English child—the first, mark you—is it not a great honor?—the first English child born in America—world-wide America!" He stood, all unheedful of the rain, bareheaded and half dressed, swaying as though at any minute he might fall to the wet ground.

He offered the cup to Vytal. His hand shook, and the troubled wine overflowed the brim. "Drink," he repeated, laughing hilariously. "Such a toast, such a child! You've heard her voice already. Damn it! Drink! Will you?"

For an instant Vytal's face went livid with a fury no man had ever seen there until now. He clinched his fists; the nails bit into the palms. "Desecrator!" And in another minute he was groping his way through the darkness toward the gate, until, finding the path, his step became firm and regular on the hard earth, as though he were marching, then died away slowly in the woods.

CHAPTER XIII

"With hair that gilds the water as it glides
And . . .
One like Actæon peeping through the grove."
—MARLOWE, in *Edward the Second.*

WEEKS passed, and still the Spanish, for some unaccountable reason, delayed their invasion.

At noon on the last day of August, Vytal, accompanied by Manteo, started southward on a short reconnoissance. Before going, he left strict injunctions with Marlowe to admit none to the fortress save those who knew the countersign. He had left the poet, who was now well skilled in military methods, to maintain a watchful guard in the absence of Hugh Rouse and Roger Prat. Furthermore, he gave Dyonis Harvie positive orders to preserve a similar caution respecting the *Admiral* and fly-boat, of which the worthy mate was now temporarily in command.

On receiving this instruction, the seaman scratched his head in perplexity. "There is one who pesters me," he said, "with importunate demands to come aboard, and as he is but a harmless lunatic—poor soul!—who says he longs to be on the deck of an English ship, and to imagine himself homeward bound, perhaps you will not refuse him."

"You speak of Master Ralph Contempt?"

"Yes."

"Even to him make no exception. Admit one, admit all. Only the few who know our sign must learn the condition of these vessels."

"And Simon Ferdinando?"

"For the form's sake you cannot question his authority. But he is well watched;" and Vytal rowed back to the shore. Here he met Marlowe.

"Our guest," said the poet, "even now seeks admittance to the fortress, longing, he pitifully declares, for the sight of weapons that can avenge his comrades' lives."

"It is hard to forbid him entrance," returned the soldier, "but there must be no exception. The example is needed to maintain secrecy;" with which Vytal joined Manteo in the woods.

Marlowe stood for a moment watching him, and then, turning, caught sight of another figure even more of interest than his friend's. Eleanor Dare was walking alone on the shore. He started forward impulsively to join her, but, remembering Ralph Contempt, whom he had left at the entrance of the fortress, he returned to enforce the rule. Ralph, however, no longer awaited him. Having stood idly, first on one foot, then on the other, looking plaintively into the stolid eyes of an armed sentinel, the youth, his patience exhausted, had wandered, with an apparent aimlessness, down to the sea. At the water's edge he stepped into a barge, and, with a long pole pushing the cumbrous craft out to the *Admiral*, once more accosted Dyonis Harvie. But, as the mate proved obdurate, he returned again, looking off now and then to the southward as he went back leisurely to land.

Then an unexpected circumstance favored him. He left the barge and struck inland behind the town. Once within shelter of the forest, he hastened by a circuitous route through almost impenetrable undergrowth to a point directly behind but about a mile to the south of the fortress. Here a

stream, secluded from the sight of any one not on its immediate margin, met his view. It was the continuation of the inlet in which Mistress Croyden had been crabbing.

To his surprise, a canoe of birch-bark, a single paddle in the bottom, floated idly, nosing the bank, and farther on, to his yet greater astonishment, a small heap of clothing lay on the sprawling roots of an oak-tree. He examined the apparel, and found a woman's linen undergarments, a long frock, kirtle, and richly garnished stomacher. Fearing that some foul play had befallen the wearer, he glanced about him, not without alarm. The spot, utterly sequestered, and only approached by the inlet, or with much difficulty, as he had approached it, by the woods, offered adequate concealment for deeds of violence.

But suddenly he heard a splashing sound from the near distance, and the expression of his eyes as they looked through the foliage to a bend in the stream, some fifty yards farther inland, changed instantly. For there was Mistress Croyden, all unheedful of his proximity, disporting herself to her heart's content, the silver ripples of the water forming an adequate covering for all save her head, which glistened in the sunlight, a pond-lily of white and gold.

Ralph hurried forward along the border of the woods until he came within easy speaking distance of the bather. A curtain of leaves hung before him, but through the interstices he could see her plainly as she melted like a water-nymph into the bosom of the stream. His eyes shone; his lips parted as though he would have called to her, but hesitating, with a new consideration in which she was evidently not the foremost subject, he returned silently to the oak about which the clothes were scattered. Stooping, he picked up all the garments, and, re-entering the forest,

hid them beneath the underbrush far within its shade. Then, with a smile almost mischievous in his boyish enjoyment of the proceeding, he made his way hastily to the town. On coming to the fortress he hallooed loudly and called to Marlowe as if in impatience and alarm.

The poet, who had relieved the sentinel, and was seated, reading, near the door, came out hurriedly. But before he could inquire concerning the other's clamor, Ralph, trembling with a well-assumed excitement, pointed wildly in quite the opposite direction from which he had come, and seemed to strive the while vainly for utterance. Marlowe, catching much of his excitement, nevertheless bade him compose himself and speak. In this the youth finally succeeded.

"They have taken her," he said, lowering his voice that no chance passer-by might hear; "they have taken her as they took me, by the hair of the head. Oh, she will be a plaything—it is very sad."

The vagueness of the announcement only added to Marlowe's disquiet. "Who? Where?"

"Oh, they have dragged her off. I saw them, the red devils, at the northeast end of the island. The game is to be played again." The words seemed fraught with an under-meaning, but to the excited listener there was no change. "The game is to be played," repeated Ralph, now in a dreary monotone, "with Gyll Croyden."

"Gyll Croyden—Gyll!" And the impetuous poet, beside himself with alarm, not stopping to hear another word, rushed away. When he had passed through the north gate of the palisade, Ralph Contempt, who had watched his headlong pursuit, turned, with an amused look, and entered the fortress. In its main apartment, a long mess-room that served

also as an armory, he found a small company of soldiers, who sat about in groups playing at cards and "tables."* Believing that Marlowe had admitted him, they made no remonstrance, and soon he was throwing dice and jesting with the merriest, his eyes roving now and then over the massive oaken walls and stacked muskets.

But as there was no great show of weapons here, he grew listless and unheedful of the game. The heavier pieces, if such there were, must be elsewhere.

Laying down his dice-cup with a yawn, he sauntered into the hallway, closing the mess-room door behind him. But here he started back quickly, as though to return to the armory, for some one who had just entered the fort was approaching him with light footsteps. Recognizing the tread as a woman's, however, he went forward more easily and met the new-comer in the middle of the hall. The light, coming from the door behind, threw out her figure in relief, but failed to reveal her face. In the next instant, though, when his eyes had become accustomed to the glare of the entrance, he started back more suddenly but less perceptibly than before. Then, quickly regaining his composure, he bowed low as to a woman and a stranger.

As the light from the doorway fell full upon his face, it became the other's turn to show surprise. Instinctively she recoiled, a world of meaning memory in her hazel eyes. But he gave no sign of notice.

"'Tis Mistress Eleanor Dare, I think," he said, with a courtly deference. "She hath been well described by all. These colonists laud her to the skies. Moreover, I have watched her many times from beneath her window."

* Backgammon.

"Your name, sir?" The voice contained no recognition or repulsion now, but only a natural inquiry.

"Ralph Contempt, yours to be commanded."

"Ah, Master Ralph Contempt, of whom I have heard much lately. The sole survivor of that brave company which perished."

"Madam," he returned, in a lower tone of double meaning, "I, too, may perish."

"Why, sir, what mean you? Are you not safe and sound among your countrymen?" There was an accusatory stress on the last word, but he only answered with a shrug of his shoulders, and reassumed his old, wandering manner.

"Are you, too," he asked, vaguely, "a dream, as I am? But oh, how different! Your eyes fire my brain, madam. Women have offered to die for me—" he was running on now with a wild impetuosity—"it is refreshing to meet one at least for whom I myself would die."

She turned to him with a look of intense hatred and repugnance, but it died suddenly; and, smiling, so that he might see the smile, whereas the scorn had been concealed, she retreated slowly toward the door. He hesitated for a moment, seeming to be drawn two ways, then followed her. Once outside the fortress she sat down upon a rusty caliver which had been found among the débris of the first settlement—sat down and waited, fearing doubtfully that her magnetism might not avail to bring him even to so short a distance from the secrets of the fort. But the chape of his scabbard grated on the threshold, and in a minute he stood bending over her with ardent eyes, yet evidently against his will. Youthful *insouciance*, which, warring with a certain haughtiness and scorn, played so often across his features, had left him a suppliant before her, yet a suppliant

who would, she felt, as a last resort, throw supplication to the winds.

"Since the description," he said, "I have dreamed of you often."

The square before the fortress was now deserted, a large crowd having followed Marlowe in his excited quest, for, despite her unpleasant notoriety, Gyll Croyden was by no means unpopular in the colony. The women might shake their heads and, justly enough, gossip as they would, but the men had been glad now to take up arms and go in search of her. And with many it was but the spirit of comradeship that inspired them.

"My queen!" The two words came in a low whisper, nevertheless with all the colossal self-assurance by which the youth, now known as Ralph Contempt, was long remembered.

The effrontery almost caused Eleanor to lose her hold on him. She rose from the cannon as though, in all the majesty of her pure womanhood, to smite and cast him from her with a mere glance from the very eyes that held him spellbound. But she realized instinctively that this man must at all costs be kept her prisoner until the return of Vytal. She felt sure that he had come as a spy from the Spanish ranks, and that, if he were allowed to rejoin them, it must mean disaster. She did not know how far he had unravelled Vytal's plan, or how deeply he had penetrated the secrets of the ships and fortress. The welfare of the whole colony, however, seemed at stake, and she must play for it against a keen, resourceful opponent. This realization, quick-born and vivid, though formless, caused her to sink down once more breathlessly to the caliver. And then a deeper shade of trouble crossed her face. It was the look of a penitent who seeks forgiveness before some invisible

tribunal, with the justifying excuse of unblemished innocence. She knew that in her heart the judge's name was Vytal, and that to him alone she was answering: "It is for our colony—*our* colony." Her mind kept repeating this, feverishly, for thus she always spoke of the settlement to herself. That night, long months ago, when she had led Vytal to Ananias, and had fought against her shame in order to reveal her husband's condition—for had not her duty to the colony demanded instant action?—that night saw the beginning of her sacrifice.

But the word "sacrifice" was not now in her mind. It is rarely those who name a crisis that live up to its demands. The details of the moment must be paramount; the troubling, perplexing flux of thought on thought, act on act, seeming chaotic in their onrush, must blind a person to the perfect whole.

"My queen!"

She raised her eyes and looked into his own. He grasped her hand. For an instant, as a last resort, she thought of alarming the soldiers, the dull murmur of whose voices reached her from within. But recognizing the folly of an outcry—for he could readily have escaped within the forest—she forbore to give alarm, and only sat there, her head drooping, for the moment seeming to yield. To voice her encouragement was impossible. While she could force herself to remain impassive, by look and gesture drawing on herself his sudden, passionate avowal, she could by no means bring a word of answer to her lips. Fortunately, he seemed content for the moment with his own reckless wooing, and so she merely listened and met his eyes—met his eyes without remonstrance—that was all, and yet to her it meant that her heart was guilty of a lie.

At length he would have had her go with him "for

a walk," he said, "within the silent forest of dreams." But to this she could not bring herself, even though it would have beguiled him from the fort and vessels.

"Nay," she replied, "we are alone here."

"But I have dreamed of you," he persisted, "as walking beside me, your hand in mine, through a vista of green and gold. And I dreamed that we stood on the brink of a silver stream—stood, oh, so long—until at last I carried you across. Yet, before that, I had called you queen—Queen of England—was it not strange? But you broke my heart by refusing to call me king. Come."

She laughed, with desperate coquetry. "And for a whimsical dream must we lose ourselves in the gloomy forest?"

He grew restless. "To the shore, then. Perchance the river should have been the sea. I did not read the dream aright. It must, indeed, have meant the sea, else wherefore the King and Queen of England?"

"No," she answered, forcing a pout to her lips. "The sound of the surf oppresses me. Have you not more faith in the music of your voice? I had not supposed you lacked self-confidence."

"Until now nor had I supposed so." He kissed her hand, which was cold and lifeless. "But now—"

"You do not realize," she interposed, striving strenuously to fight down the meaning regret in her voice, "how much I have given you." At this he seized her hand again, to cover it with kisses, and, growing more bold, bent down to kiss her lips; but she recoiled quickly, and, eluding him, stepped back until the cannon lay between them. Then she forced herself to laugh.

He vaulted over the caliver. "Even this great piece," he cried, "although it were ready primed,

could scarce deter me," and, seizing both of her hands, he leaned down to repeat his first attempt. But she hung her head, and his lips only brushed the velvet of her cap. Then, raising her eyes to his, by sheer force of will she dominated his desire, held it in check, yet kindled it the more.

"Stay," she objected, calmly, "you little comprehend the ways of women; they must be wooed before they can be won."

He started back with an impatient gesture. "They can wait, then, to be wooed," and, turning, he would have re-entered the fortress.

Had she lost him? Must the humiliation of it all be bitterly deepened by failure? No. She felt her woman's power, her tingling wit and intuitive diplomacy rise quickly to meet the crisis. "I pray you, do not go, Master Contempt. Have I been so very unkind?"

He turned back smiling, his self-conceit actually leading him to believe that his own little ruse of apparent indifference had worked success.

A bold, flashing plan came to her. She would play upon the man's two conflicting desires at one and the same time. A double spell must shackle him.

"I have it," she suggested, in a yielding voice. "Let us row out to the *Admiral*, and pretend we have left this dangerous land for good and all."

His eyes sparkled. Fortune had showered him with favors. He felt less compunction now in making love. She little knew, he thought, how opportunely her suggestion came. He even feigned reluctance for the moment, to hide the eagerness of his steps.

They walked to the shore.

"I have not been on board my father's ship," she

told him, "since we landed in the fly-boat. You have heard, no doubt, of our mishaps?"

"Yes, I've heard." There was a twinkle in his eye. "But one thing I know not, and that is the countersign. I fear Dyonis Harvie will forbid me the ship."

She laughed. "Nay, he is my tire-woman's husband. You shall see."

In a few minutes they were under the *Admiral's* side, and in one more she had mounted to the deck.

"It is against Captain Vytal's orders," expostulated the mate, as Ralph followed her. "Under your favor, Master Contempt must stay behind."

But the youth was already beside them. "Nay, Dyonis," remonstrated Eleanor. "You forget 'tis the governor's daughter who brings him."

"I ask your pardon, Mistress Dare; but 'tis not that I forget too easily; it is that I remember well a positive command." And he made as though to assist the subject of their talk down into the barge again.

"How now?" she demanded, imperiously. "Are any save my father's orders superior to mine own? I had not looked to find my maid-servant's husband so disloyal."

At this the poor seaman wavered on the horns of a dilemma. Against Mistress Dare, of all the colony, he could not persist further, for she was regarded already as a kind of queen in the little settlement, who had shown kindness to the very humblest in sickness and distress, and was above all others most readily obeyed.

Harvie scratched his head. "You will explain, I pray, to Captain Vytal."

"I will explain."

The mate walked away mumbling to himself.

Whereat, turning with a laugh of feigned delight and mischief, Eleanor led her companion to the room of state. "It is here," she said, "that the king should hold his court. And, besides, I am anxious to inspect the chamber in which my poor father used to sit, head in hands, hoping against hope for my safe arrival." She paused. "Furthermore, there is wine within of a rare vintage."

"Wine," he said, eagerly — "golden wine. We shall drink to our realm, to the England I pictured in my dreams. But no, first, first to our love."

She felt his breath hot against her cheek. "And to solitude," she added, with an under-meaning in her thoughts. Then, daringly, for the game at moments carried her away, "To an immemorial captivity in the room of state."

He had, however, thrown caution to the winds, being, as he believed, at the very threshold of a double goal. Nevertheless, as they entered the long apartment, he assumed his old, pitiable air. "It is cruel," he said, "to mention captivity to one who, having but just escaped so fell a slavery, is again in direst bondage."

"It was thoughtless," she allowed, with subtle truth, "and reprehensible to talk of victory when as yet we have neither of us won."

He strove to encircle her waist with his arm, but once more, as if with natural coquetry, she eluded him. "Not yet won?" he whispered, passionately. "It is won; it shall be won—and by me."

"Nay, sir, not so fast. You forget the wine; it is there." She pointed to a heavy sideboard of black oak near the wall, at the same time taking a silver flagon from the table.

"Ah, the golden wine!"

He went to the sideboard, and, kneeling with his

back toward her, thrust a hand across the shelf of a lower cupboard. Finding a dusty bottle in the corner, he withdrew it. "'Tis as old," he said, closing the doors and surveying the film of cobwebs, "as old as our love is new. Come, dearest—" but, on turning, he broke off suddenly.

The flash of a white ruff, the soft whisper of slippers across a rug, and he was alone—a prisoner.

But then—even then, as the key grated in the lock—he laughed like a boy who has been caught in a game of blind-man's-buff or hide-and-seek. Even in the first moment of his plight, amusement and an uncontrollable sense of the ludicrous sparkled in his blue eyes. Impulsively knocking off the bottle's neck against the sideboard, he picked up a silver cup which had rolled to his feet from the cabin door and filled it to the brim.

"You remembered me," he reflected, sipping the wine with a too-apparent relish as though acting to himself. "You remembered me. That is one point gained."

In the meanwhile, Eleanor Dare, on the deck, was graciously explaining to Dyonis her apparent unreasonableness and breach of discipline. "You will guard the door until relieved." And so saying, she returned in her barge to the shore.

Early in the evening, Vytal, re-entering the town, was surprised to find her evidently awaiting him at the fort.

"The man," she exclaimed, breathlessly, without any prelude of greeting, "the man you fought with on the bridge is here!"

"Frazer?"

"Yes, Frazer, known lately as Ralph Contempt."

A sharp, sudden comprehension, all the keener for having been so long deferred, sprang into the sol-

dier's face. "'Twas to set him aland that the Spanish vessel anchored to the southward. I knew the boy's eyes. 'Twas his heavy beard deceived me."

She smiled. "A woman knows from the heart," she said, "while a man's head aches with perplexity. And, besides, whereas he only fought with you, me he insulted." Her cheeks flushed, her eyes revealing the pure hatred and anger they had so long been forced to mask with smiles.

The look fired Vytal's blood. But, following his first silent fury, an expression which had never yet been in his eyes changed them to those of a wounded animal, and he seemed for the moment almost ashamed. The thought had cut him cruelly that his worst enemies on earth were a mere careless stripling and a shallow drunkard, with not even the boy's bravery to commend him as a foe. There are a few men who regret the lack of noble power in an enemy as deeply as the many deplore its non-existence in a friend.

"Where is he?"

"I have imprisoned him in the *Admiral.*"

"You!"

"Yes." Her look had a strange penitence in it and no triumph. He dimly understood the reason, and an expression of pain crossed his own features. But there was not a trace of condemnation in the deep-set eyes, his faith being perfect. "Yes," she added, in a whisper, as though half to herself, "'twas for our colony I led him on. But oh, if by any chance he should escape—"

"It would matter little," broke in Vytal.

"How so?"

"He has failed. You have frustrated his plan to estimate our strength. Even were he to return, he could impart naught of value to the others. But stay, in what room have you imprisoned him?"

"In the main cabin."

"That is well. His knowledge of the fortress would avail them nothing. St. Magil, I doubt not, knows the force and number of our arms. 'Tis mainly my new arrangement of the ships that holds the key to our defence. Thus, Mistress Dare, even should he escape, which he must not, you have accomplished that which I had not supposed within a woman's range to compass. I thank you—deeply."

Her face brightened for the instant, but, as he walked away, she returned to her home sadly, as though even the skilful winning of her first play had brought only an ephemeral gladness.

Vytal had but just crossed the square when Marlowe, having entered the town from the north, joined him. The poet was dishevelled from his hasty pursuit through the forest and extremely agitated. "Gyll Croyden has been captured by the Indians!"

"Who told you that?"

"Our guest."

"And so you went in search of her?"

"Most naturally, for though she and I are naught save comrades, comrades we shall be to the end."

Vytal studied his face. "Our guest's name, Kyt, is Frazer."

"Frazer!" The poet started. "We are tricked. Tricked by a boy! Forgive me. You must leave another to defend the fortress," and Marlowe, drawing his sword, held it out to the soldier. "Leave me the pen only, for I am not worthy of this."

But Vytal laid a hand on his shoulder kindly. "I was befooled myself."

"Let us go to him," suggested Christopher.

"Nay, I have just sent Hugh Rouse, who returned with me from his picket duty. He will bring the fellow to the fort."

"Let us wait in the armory, then. I long to see that bantering actor pleading for our mercy. He would play excellent well upon the stage, with his tales of torture and feigned idiocy."

So they waited, waited long, and still Hugh Rouse did not return.

The cause of this delay is briefly told.

Hugh, having stepped into a canoe, had, with a few long sweeps of his paddle, come to the *Admiral;* and the captive heard voices approaching the cabin door. At this he rose from the table, and, with an air still somewhat careless, yet of definite purpose, concealed himself behind the arras with which the walls were hung.

Once more the key grated in its lock, and Frazer heard two men enter the long cabin, which by now was enveloped in gloom. Seeming to stand near the threshold, while their eyes were probably accustoming themselves to the darkness, neither of these men spoke at first, but finally the prisoner heard one whisper to the other and, with a deep oath, advance farther into the room.

"He hides. Do you, Dyonis, guard the door."

Harvie obeyed, while Rouse, growing more and more amazed, searched the cabin without success. He might have searched until the crack of doom and come no nearer to a trace of the cunning quarry.

For, even on their first entrance midway into the room, when Rouse had supposed that Harvie held the door, and Harvie that the captive must certainly be before them, the bird had flown. Softly, in that first moment, the heavy arras undulated, as though a breeze were passing across it from end to end of the apartment. Then, parting from the wall near the entrance, it fell flat again—a motionless, innocent piece of tapestry in darkness.

And, suppressing a laugh, Master Ralph low himself into Hugh's canoe, to paddle away ur the cover of evening.

After propelling the light craft silently for sev minutes, he listened. An oath rang out in deep l from the *Admiral's* deck. Hearing this, he tur the prow of his canoe toward a narrow inlet, and tered on a winding forest stream. The moon, rising above the trees, ensilvered his course wit radiance that found itself reflected yet more brigl in his youthful eyes.

On and on he paddled with silent speed, u coming to an abrupt bend in the stream, he saw other canoe on the opposite shore. Looking al him, he appeared to hesitate; but suddenly a gol thing, round like a second moon, appeared over edge of the lonely craft.

"You will find them," he called, "on a direct with your canoe, back in the brushwood. Farev Gyll, and thank you."

"Thank you!" came the answer, in exasperat after him. "Here have I been starving, fearing move! Villanous—" but he was beyond ear now, as, running the prow of his boat onto a shelv bank in the distance, he plunged straightway the forest.

CHAPTER XIV

"Their blood and yours shall seal these treacheries!"
—MARLOWE, in *Edward the Second.*

"BROWSING soul! I cannot contemplate so much obtuseness without longing to prod thee to some show of wakefulness with my sword!"

It was Roger Prat who spoke, and Hugh Rouse who gave no answer. They were lying at full length on the brow of a low cliff, looking out across the water. It was night. Not a star shone. The town lay seemingly asleep behind them. A large culverin stood close to one side, also peering through a fringe of grasses. The two ships, at anchor within musket-range, carried no lights.

"Had it not been for your ox-brained stupidity, we might have been laughing at Master Contemptuous even now." The giant rolled over and surveyed his vituperative companion with a yawn. "Now, had I been there," Roger persisted, "instead of cooling my heels at the pleasure of these knaves, had I been there in place of a numskull, Master Frazer would have been *here.* Dolt!"

"Have a care, Roger! I'll brook little more of thy poet-aping names. 'Twas Marlowe taught them to you, and ever since, like a magpie—"

But the other was shaking with mock laughter. "Brook little more!" he gasped; "brook little more, indeed! And think you I fear the threat of one who lets a laughing infant tweak his nose and run away

without so much as spanking the child? I can see him smiling now, as he floated off in the canoe. Why, 'twas in the self-same craft you brought! Now, that was considerate of thee, gull."

"Leave off, Roger."

"Wherefore?"

"Think you I like to remember the escape?" There was a note almost pitiful in the gruff voice, a pathetic growl that sounded like a moan. "An I were a wench, Prat, I'd weep for sheer vexation."

Roger curiously eyed him, and, strangely enough, the idea of this giant weeping failed to touch his bubbling sense of the ludicrous. With an unprecedented consideration of Hugh's feelings, he changed the subject.

Five miles to the southward another couple held converse. They stood on the deck of a Spanish vessel—by name the *Madre de Dios*—apart from a company of soldiers.

"The man we sent to await him," said one, "has returned alone. Yet our esteemed prince was to have left Roanoke this morning."

"Then what think you, St. Magil?" asked the other, who was evidently a Spanish officer of no mean rank. "I fear his wayward highness has come to harm, and is a prisoner in their fort. Shall we not push forward without further delay?"

"By all means let us hasten to the attack. Towaye, the Indian who guided me from Roanoke, has gone with provisions to meet his highness near the town."

In the main cabin of an English ship still a third couple conversed with as much import in their words as the second.

"There is yet no sign?"

"Not yet, Captain Vytal."

"They will carry no lights, Dyonis."

"Nay, sir, I look for a black shadow, and listen for the ripple under its bow."

As though the hand of Death were on them, the ships and the town lay still. Only a single circle of light, like a watchful eye with a dark iris, shone through an aperture in the fortress wall. The central disk was a cannon's muzzle.

On the ramparts of the fort a man stood alone, looking out across the water. It was Christopher Marlowe, alert, restless, and impatient.

Below him, in the armory, a small gathering of women and soldiers, under the immediate command of Captain Pomp, sat about in groups, waiting. In one corner, apart from the rest, Eleanor Dare and her father talked in low tones, while Margery Harvie, on a bench beside them, crooned a lullaby to an infant that lay sleeping in her lap.

From time to time another woman, who sat at a table across the room, even now jesting with several soldiers, looked at the central figure of this group with an expression in which resentment and admiration were curiously blended. Gyll Croyden had frequently looked at Eleanor thus, and always as though from a distance greater than the actual space which lay between them.

Suddenly the child, who had been christened Virginia, in honor of England's possession, awoke, crying feebly, and Eleanor, with much concern, took it in her arms. Her expression, as she looked down into the little face, suggested varied emotions. There was a mother's love in her eyes, a deep maternal devotion; but, mingled with this, another, less obvious,

expression seemed to betray some depth of feeling at odds with the first, and possibly stronger, though more subtle and indefinable.

She turned to her father. "Must we wait forever here? It seems an eternity, and I grow fearful lest—"

The kindly governor interrupted her. "Nay, there is naught to fear, my little one. They will doubtless attack the ships at first, thinking us all unwatchful, or vigilant only in the town. It is for that reason, you know, that Captain Vytal, seeking to repulse and overwhelm them at the first onset, has manned the *Admiral* and concealed over seventy men below. Of a surety the enemy will attack this vessel first, as it lies to the south and is the larger prize. Yet, mark you, they will be utterly unable thus to cut off our last means of retreat."

But his attempt to reassure her failed. "I fear many will be killed," she said, half to herself, and he saw that her eyes were moist with unshed tears.

"Let us pray it may not be so, Eleanor. Our people seem to have caught Vytal's unflinching courage; moreover, the men, well armed and galliated, will find our foe all unprepared for so sudden a resistance."

To this a new voice, gentle but masculine, made rejoinder, and the Oxford preacher stood beside them. "You have said 'Let us pray'; with your Excellency's permission I will do so." In a moment the whole company were on their knees, while the preacher invoked the aid of the God of battles in simple words.

The infant in its mother's lap was crying more pitifully now than heretofore. And, without warning, as the soldiers resumed their games again and Gyll Croyden her babble, a convulsion seized it, distorting the diminutive features cruelly.

Eleanor, rising, rocked it to and fro in her arms.

The mother's love was now unquestionably predominant. Handing the child to Margery Harvie, she spoke a few words to her father: "There is an herb which Manteo has shown me; boiled in water, it will restore her at once. I must get it."

"Nay, but—"

"Oh, there is no danger. It grows but just behind the palisade. I go myself, for I alone can find it."

"I will go with you."

"No, stay here. Your presence is needed to encourage them. I will take two soldiers, if you so desire," and she beckoned to a couple of fighting-men who sat near by. "Bring a lanthorn, concealed as best you can beneath your cloak."

She led the way to a rear entrance. As the soldiers unbarred the open door, a woman's voice addressed her. "I go with you an I may. Two women are safer than one alone." It was Gyll Croyden.

Eleanor turned and looked into her face for an instant, then accepted her offer. "I thank you."

In another minute they were hastening silently to the palisade in single file, one of their guardians leading, the other bringing up the rear. With difficulty they groped their way to the southern entrance of the town, and, after a word to the sentry stationed there, passed out. Soon Eleanor, by the aid of the soldier's lanthorn, was plucking leaves from a bush that grew not over a furlong from the town.

They started to return, but paused, breathless, hearing a rustle of leaves behind them.

Then, suddenly, a low whir, as of a bird's wing, and the rearmost soldier fell on his face, dead. A long, slender arrow, the like of which they had never seen, quivered between his shoulder-blades, a shimmering reed in the lanthorn light.

They broke into a run.

Again the whisper of Death, and their second escort, struck in the hip, staggered and fell to his knees. At this Gyll Croyden, crying aloud for help, started forward again, but Eleanor had stopped to succor the wounded man.

In that moment the two women heard a quick step behind them, and, before they could turn about, their arms were seized and pinioned at their backs. A silken kerchief fell like a thick veil over Eleanor's eyes and tightened, but not so suddenly as to shut out the sight of a short, half-naked Indian, who was engaged in blindfolding Gyll Croyden. Then a voice, evidently from the man who had bandaged her own eyes, spoke in a low tone, and she recognized the accents with dismay.

They were Frazer's. "To the ravine, Towaye, and await me there." His voice sank to a whisper, yet not too low for Eleanor's quick ears. "Remember, no harm to them an you value life."

By now the wounded guardsman, having dragged himself toward Ralph, wildly drew his sword; then, painfully struggling to his knees, thrust in blind desperation, but only succeeded in pricking Frazer's arm.

The youth turned, and, overestimating his opponent's strength, despatched the kneeling soldier with no compunction nor instinctive mercy. He was a man who would demand little quarter, and who, for all his boyish fribbling, gave less.

"Quick, Towaye!" But once more Gyll cried out, though Eleanor stood impassive by her side. The youth frowned. "Gag them," and he hurried to Eleanor. "My love," he whispered, "the king wins."

On the water a dense shadow moved slowly toward

Roanoke. Like Destiny it glided forward, silent, inexorable, black.

Without resistance, it came closer and yet closer to its quarry, until at last the shadow met a shadow like itself, as cloud meets cloud. And as from clouds, a guttural oath of thunder burst suddenly forth in fury to smite and profane the ear of night.

The shadow was a panther of the sea, stealing on a prey seemingly tranquil and asleep—a wild beast of the desert coming to claim by the law of might an oasis in the waste.

The crucial moment, so long awaited, had come at last.

Two ships became alive and fought for Roanoke Island.

"Captain Vytal, they are here!"

"How near, Dyonis?"

"So near that in another instant they will board us."

"To arms, then!"

"Ay," and a whisper ran from mouth to mouth along the deck. There was a low click as of pistol-triggers cocking, and fifty dark shadows, which had lain prone behind the bulwark, rose, each to one knee.

The ships lay breast to breast, feeling each other's sides. And suddenly the glare of a hundred new-lit torches illumined the Spanish deck; but the *Admiral's* bulwark shielded her ambush from the light.

Without warning, a line of steel corselets and morions, flashing in the radiance, started forward from the *Madre de Dios*, started, rolled on, and rose to the bulwark as a silver wave rises in the moonlight, superb, brilliant, invincible, vaunting itself before the sable shore. And, like moon-rays playing across the crest, a hundred swords flashed high.

The silver surf, crashing, broke. Hidden rocks had awaited it in darkness. Baffled, it lashed them, rose, fell, dispersed, concentrated—a wild seethe of tormented fury.

The wave was foam: there was momentarily no concertion, no detail. Chaos rose above order, anarchy above method, chagrined amazement above victorious triumph.

The surprise was complete. At both ends the Spanish line wavered. Here the counter-attack began more suddenly than in the centre.

Vytal at one end, Dyonis Harvie at the other, turned both flanks of the enemy. It was a manœuvre that gave the lie to chaos. Method lurked in the seeming madness. The Spanish cannoneers, having heard the sounds of a hand-to-hand conflict, at the first surprise rushed to their comrades' aid. The culverins and minions, nosing the *Admiral's* hull, were for a moment deserted. The impulse had been foreseen; hence the flank movement.

Vytal's first tactic, bold and open, succeeded. Fortunately, the *Madre de Dios* was not a man-of-war, but only a Biscayan carack, transformed temporarily and diverted from her commerce between St. Augustine and Spain. Thus her ports were few, and the guns below deck, being inconsiderable in number, were easily seized to prevent bombardment. A score of English, pursued by the now witting gunners, gained the command of these pieces. In an instant the guns were spiked, their silence maintained with iron gags, their deep throats choking.

Harvie, with his men, defended them. Vytal returned to the bulwark. The Spanish cannoneers, finding recapture impossible, likewise joined the main body.

Then for a time mere carnal bloodshed followed.

The steel sea had leaped back upon itself. The Spanish aggressors became defenders on their own decks. The ranks of both sides were broken. Each man fought for himself.

Here it was sword against sword; there pike and pike. Here pistols and arquebuses, mouthing each other, thundered spitefully at closest range; there a piece of brass ordnance on deck shone in the torch-glare, itself a flame that belched flame and shot out clanking chain-shot, gobbets of iron or missiles like dumb-bells—twin deaths. Here it was hand-to-hand, men glutting the lust of their inborn hatred by sheer brute force, weaponless; there a crimson poniard gleamed dully for a second, and a figure lurched backward to the slippery deck. Here, whirring, a garish firebrand fell to an upturned face and burned away the look of anguish; there a sword bled a shadow.

But strategy worked in silence and darkness. The first tactic of Vytal was answered by St. Magil. A man made his way to the bow of the *Madre de Dios*, shielding a torch. The wind favored his project.

There was a flash of light across the strip of water from prow to prow, a tongue of flame in the air, and the firebrand fell flaring to a mat on the *Admiral's* beak-head. The man, cowering, watched it, safe in the knowledge that his vessel lay immediately to windward of the foe. Gradually the unnoticed fire spread to the bowsprit's mat, and thence to the false stem of wood. At the same moment a number of chains and ropes were flung out like the tentacles of a polypus from the Spanish yards to the rigging of the *Admiral*. At the ends of these groping fingers, irons like talons grappled with halyards and naked spars.

The ships were locked in a death-grip.

With a sudden, concerted rush, as though the flames encouraged it to advance, the sea of shining morions and corselets rose once more, surged forward, broke over the *Admiral's* bulwark, undulating, clashing, roaring, as the receding line of English fell back before it inch by inch.

The *Admiral's* deck was now a heaving sea of molten silver.

But the eyes of St. Magil, looking across to it from the outer shade of the *Madre de Dios's* bow, suddenly grew grave and lost their triumph. The wind had changed. Fate intervened. Vytal was backed by the elements. The insidious fire, of Sir Walter's own kindling, had recoiled. The *Admiral* carried no sails, the *Madre de Dios* many. The fire returned to feed itself. Leaving behind it a burning skeleton superstructure, from which small spars fell flaming on the combatants amid a maze of ropes that glowed like fuses over all, it glided back, a venomous snake, to the Spanish vessel, or, rather, like a hundred snakes, for the very grapple-ropes by which St. Magil had bound his enemy were golden serpents now writhing to the shrouds.

Suddenly a tongue of fire, licking the Spanish bowsprit and spritsail yards, lolled listlessly for an instant, as though satiated and fatigued, then shot up all the more greedily to the foretop.

And now a wavering sheet of flame rose and swayed like an immense golden flag, as though the fire itself had flung to the breeze a royal emblem of destruction.

But at the instant, when only the bowsprit and spritsail yard had as yet succumbed, St. Magil had hastened amidships. Here he commanded the few Spaniards who had not yet forced their way to the English vessel to cut the grapples and cast off immediately. But the intertwining fingers that he him-

self had stretched out to enfold the prey held tenaciously. Snarled inextricably, they lay across from ship to ship, high and low, a hopeless tangle of fetters.

When finally the sheet of flame unspread itself aloft, St. Magil desisted. His men would have rushed then to the *Admiral*, preferring the chance of battle to a furnace death; but he controlled with desperate power.

"Cut away the bowsprit and foretop-gallant-mast!"

The men, following him, ran to the forecastle. "The foretop-gallant-mast is too high. It burns!"

"The foretop-mast, then, quick! and cut the halyards!"

A sudden descending flare, as if the heavens had opened to envelop the striving seamen, and the flag of flame lay roaring at their feet. The fire had struck its colors. They grasped the burning canvas and flung it overboard.

"To the attack!" And St. Magil, at last drawing his sword for open fight, led them in the main contest.

Two score Englishmen, in double file, stood side by side on the *Admiral's* deck repelling a superior force that strove to exterminate them. The front line fought with swords; the rear with pistols and musketoons, whose barrels looked out between friendly shoulders before them. Thus the swordsmen, ranged alternately with the musketeers, were slightly in advance, and must needs bear the brunt of the onslaught.

In this file Vytal held a central position. Beside him, either by accident or purpose, stood Ananias Dare, and beyond the assistant, Dyonis Harvie, who had been recalled. In a line at their feet lay their fallen comrades and opponents, forming, in the final

throes of death, a ghastly rampart across which the living fought.

Again and again the onrush and repulse. The double file was a wall of stone.

St. Magil himself, springing into the middle breach of his foremost rank, armed with a broadsword, made bold to attack the man whom he held responsible for the unflinching resistance. Vytal, who now carried a heavy blade himself, met his chief antagonist with stern, almost business-like precision, as he had encountered all the unknown soldiers that had come before.

Suddenly St. Magil turned aside to Ananias Dare and thrust viciously. The stroke threatened death. Vytal parried it. For many minutes, that seemed years, he had been defending two men at once. St. Magil fell back to the rear ranks with a lifeless arm. A Spanish officer of high rank took his place and, with a rallying cry, led his men once more against the battered English wall.

Steel in torment clashed and rang on shields that thwarted its desire. Leaden bullets, like driven sleet, shot from both sides, buried themselves with a monotonous thud in heavy cotton targets. Every man but one had only himself to guard. Save with Vytal, there was no trust but the cause and the individual.

The Spaniards persisted. They had been held at the last assault, but not repelled. They were on the brink of victory, eight score against less than four; the issue could not be doubtful.

Ananias Dare, although brave with a slight excess of wine and the knowledge that Vytal stood beside him, wavered. St. Magil's thrust had shattered his puny courage. He gave way and fell back to the line of musketeers. Vytal and Dyonis Harvie

closed in before him. But the disastrous effect of even one man's retreat was not so easily averted. His sword had proved of little service, but the influence of each man on all had been incalculable. A single bolt in the precise mechanism had broken. The machine shook, grated, and threatened to fall in pieces.

The line tottered. Ananias, perceiving with terror the result of his cowardice, sought to retrieve himself by rallying his fellows with a cry. But despair rose above encouragement in the call. His eyes, wild and horror-struck, looked over Harvie's shoulder at the force that must surely in another instant overrun him. He was thinking only of himself then, not of the cause nor of his countrymen. His headpiece had fallen off, revealing a dishevelled mass of silken hair, wet with the sweat of fear. His lips dripped foam. The end, he believed, had come.

Yet Vytal, with a sharp word, delayed it. The voice, deep and resonant with desperate command, reawakened hope and energy. The attackers neither gave way nor succeeded in advancing.

Had Vytal lost? It seemed to him impossible. He had never known the word save once, in youth, when a rigid cordon of steel like this had encircled him in the streets of Paris. The memory of that massacre, in which his parents had been murdered by Catholics, like these, redoubled his fury. He flung himself against the line of bristling swords that, impassable as a vast *cheval-de-frise,* checked him at every quarter. The knowledge that he held another life in trust—a detestable life—nevertheless, must he not preserve it?—quickened his every fibre for a new attempt. But above and beneath all a woman's name seemed to reverberate through his whole being like the war-cry of a soul.

He thrust, thrust, and thrust again. The swords

met, slithered, and the Spanish officer fell groaning on the rampart of dead.

The enemy's line gave way. The English started forward. But St. Magil, nursing his wounded arm in the rear, met the emergency with a new tactic. Hoarsely he bade a dozen men to stand upon the bulwark, each with a torch in hand. The manœuvre favored him. The English fell back apace. A line of wavering light blinded their eyes. The firebrands' dazzling glare rendered their thrusts and parries far wilder and more uncertain than before. Vytal's face, illuminated vividly by the maddening light, grew doubly tense and desperate. Wounded in the left arm by the slash of a cutlass, his corselet dented in many places, his eyes haggard and lips white, his grizzled brow and close-cut beard clotted with sweat and blood, he nevertheless stood there still, a grim, unconquerable Death. He fell to his knee, and fought so; then, staggering, rose again and towered indomitable. Still the word "lose" had no meaning for him save when applied to an enemy. And even now, on the very verge of defeat, his rage and iron will thus applied it in the turmoil of his depths to St. Magil.

Dyonis Harvie fell beside him wounded in the throat. Vytal turned to a musketeer who had stepped forward in the opening. "Mark the torch-bearers!" and then, louder—"The torch-bearers!"

A few shots rang out with new purpose amid the havoc, and three Spaniards lurched backward from the bulwark, flinging toward the English with a last derision the sputtering cressets as they fell. St. Magil turned to the men nearest him. "Replace them!" And three soldiers, leaping to the bulwark, reinforced the lurid line of flambeaus which had worked so much disaster.

The ammunition of the English marksmen had given out. Vytal noted the silence. "Your cutlasses! Stand close to me! We are Englishmen . . . There! . . . Good! . . . Hold fast! . . . Death is not defeat, surrender is! . . . We . . . win . . . dying!"

His words took the place of bullets, his voice of the steel blades which were now but streaks of crimson on the deck.

"*Dying!*"

But no; suddenly from the near shore, on which a little knot of women stood wringing their hands in grief, a canoe shot out toward the *Madre de Dios*. It held one man. Then a second craft glided swiftly from the land as though in pursuit, and this, too, was propelled by a single paddle. Next, yet a third boat, and a fourth—but these were barges—joined in what seemed a chase, and each contained ten soldiers from the fort.

In a moment the foremost craft had gained the Spanish vessel, and Frazer was climbing up a rope to the top deck. Marlowe, from the second canoe, followed close upon his heels, livid with fury. Frazer turned to cut the rope, but, finding himself too late, rushed through a network of burning stays and spars to the scene of the last stand. In a second he was lost in the mêlée. Marlowe, once on the deck, forbore to pursue him farther, and turned to Captain Pomp, who, with twenty soldiers, was scaling the vessel's side from the barges. "Not a word, any of you, concerning Mistress Dare. Are your arms ready?"

"Ay."

They advanced rapidly, Marlowe and Captain Pomp leading through a whirl of smoke—all but one, who broke away, and, creeping into the darkness,

Seeing the Spaniards returning, Frazer sought to reassure them; but in the middle of his remonstrance St. Magil bade them reinforce their comrades on the *Admiral*.

They strove to obey, but could not. Their friends, retreating in disorder, fell back before the concerted attack of Vytal and Marlowe. Many, who at the first had been hemmed in, lay lifeless across the scuppers, weltering in a stream of blood that could find no outlet to the sea. Others, more fortunate, now stampeded back over the Spanish bulwark and formed a compact phalanx for defence.

The tide had turned. The English, reforming their ranks, were on the point of advancing with a rush. Frazer, however, had foreseen the issue. "Cut the grapples!" The ropes, now severed by fire, held in few places.

In a moment the *Madre de Dios* began to fall away. At this instant a small, stooping figure scurried like a rat from the *Admiral's* forward hatches and sprang across the widening strip of water to the Spanish ship. Vytal saw the man. "Who is that?" And some one answered, "Ferdinando."

Marlowe blanched. "My God! the powder in the hold—a dozen kegs of Benjamin! Is it possible that—"

But Vytal, wounded though he was and blinded with sweat, had already gained the hatches. With his sword he fought the last foe—a long, slow-burning fuse, whose spark shone like a glow-worm in the darkness. Severing the slow-match with a stroke of his weapon, he ground his heel into the spark and glanced about sharply to make sure of no further danger. Then, regaining the deck, he looked first at Dyonis Harvie, who was being lowered by Captain Pomp into a cock-boat, and next out across the water

with haggard but victorious eyes. "It is well," he said, in a low voice, for he could just distinguish the *Madre de Dios*, like a beaten hound, dragging herself away into the gloom.

Suddenly, as if life had ended with the necessity for action, he fell back senseless into Marlowe's arms.

CHAPTER XV

"Ah, life and soul, still hover in his breast,
And leave my body senseless as the earth."
—MARLOWE, in *Tamburlaine.*

"DEAREST, the king wins." When Frazer had spoken these words, prior to the meeting of the ships, Eleanor Dare and Gyll Croyden were led away into the forest by Towaye, the Indian. They gave no outcry, each having across her mouth a bandage of silk, nor was resistance possible, their hands being firmly tied behind them. Yet Gyll, at last, would have thrown herself upon the ground and refused positively to walk farther had she not feared a worse fate at the hands of their escort. Moreover, she heard Eleanor's footsteps rustling just ahead without cessation, and her heart took courage of the example.

Finally, after they had followed a narrow trail seemingly for miles, Towaye, who brought up the rear of the single file, halted. Then, unblinding their eyes and unshackling their wrists, probably by another's command, he bade them be seated on the trunk of a fallen elm to rest themselves. Each was but a shadow to the other, so deep lay the darkness in the forest. But the shadows were not long motionless, for presently, with a word, Towaye told them to rise, and, binding their hands now before them, yet leaving their eyes unbandaged, pushed them once more ahead of him on the trail. Thus they walked for an hour in silence until commanded to

turn aside, at which, after entering a small clearing, they were once more permitted to halt.

Apparently they had now reached their destination, for the Indian, striking two stones, one against another, set fire to a heap of dry leaves, on which he threw an armful of brushwood. As the glade was illuminated the women glanced about them quickly, for they were not long allowed to remain in the opening. Leading them to the clearing's margin, near a deep ravine, Towaye drew aside a hanging curtain of grape-vines and motioned them into a natural arbor whose walls and roof were formed by an inextricable tangle of tough tendrils, which rendered the stronghold as impervious as though it had been enclosed by stone. The curtain, drawn back and twisted like a portière, left open a narrow, brambly entrance, through which the near fire cast its glare to light up the interior. Large clusters of grapes hung in profusion on every side and carpeted the earth, their rich fragrance filling the air as they were trod under foot by the two who entered.

The Indian, and doubtless Frazer, too, had been here earlier in the day, for just within scope of the firelight was the carcass of a young deer, while on the ground a pannier of various provisions lay beside the arbor's entrance. Furthermore, a long riding-cloak had been spread out like a rug in the natural cell.

"Master Frazer is most thoughtful of our comfort," observed Gyll, seating herself thereon, with a laugh. But Eleanor, sinking down, fatigued and despairing, made no answer. Meanwhile their captor was methodically cutting from the deer a steak, which he presently held over the fire on the prongs of a green crotch. Soon the meat sizzled and grew black, whereupon, turning to his captives, the Indian

held it out, and, with a gesture, bade them eat. Gyll laughed. "Are we to devour it whole, Towaye?"

The Indian, who, thanks to his sojourn in England, understood their language, considered the question for a minute; then, evidently suspecting that Gyll thus sought to obtain a weapon, smiled craftily, laid down the meat, and proceeded to cut it up with a knife of Frazer's resembling a Toledo poniard. Next, taking the pieces in his fingers, he piled them on a pewter plate which he drew from the pannier, and offered his guests the savory dish with a grunt of hospitality.

Again Gyll laughed. "But our hands are tied."

Towaye shrugged his shoulders, and, squatting on the ground, held his wrists together, then raised the dark fingers to his lips. "This way," he said, "prisoners eat." And now, turning away, he busied himself in preparing his own meal of venison.

Gyll, with a wry face, stood upon her feet, and, reaching to the low roof, plucked a bunch of grapes—necessarily with both hands at once—which she offered to Eleanor. Then, having provided herself with another cluster, she sat down again and bit off the grapes one by one, with evident relish. Eleanor, however, only looked out listlessly to the crackling fire, her hands clasped, her fingers intertwined with feverish strength. Tears fell slowly on the forgotten fruit in her lap, causing it to shine like a cluster of inestimable rubies in the firelight. Her face, even now like a child's, but very spiritual for all its witchery, was more sad than fearful, more given over to an expression of deep distress and hopelessness than to terror and apprehension. Her hazel eyes, moist and lustrous, seemed to have gained a new depth, which for the first time reached to her very soul. Their look was a prayer. "My little one, my

little Virginia," again and again she repeated inwardly, half to herself and half to a Higher Power—"My little Virginia." Like the dull surge of heavy, monotonous surf, her thoughts beat upon her brain, now in comprehending supplication, now in mere unconscious repetition, until suddenly the despair of her eyes became less passive and more intense. Another name sprang into the ceaseless, unutterable murmur and all but escaped her pale lips—"John Vytal."

Gyll Croyden lay, with elbows on the ground and chin in hand, watching her. The two faces presented a striking contrast, Eleanor's as we have seen it, Gyll's an almost indescribable paradox, so suggestive was it of contradictory emotions. The whole expression showed, first, that she had utterly forgotten her plight and surroundings. Eleanor's face absorbed her thoughts, thoughts which were, apparently, at odds. In her unaccustomed silence there was consideration of her companion's feelings; in her eyes an unmistakable admiration and kind of wonder; while about the corners of her mouth a look of ironical amusement played unforbidden. Adding an expression more serious—if the word is permissible in connection with so gay a face—her brows were contracted defiantly. And, stranger than all, a keen observer would have noted an unwonted sadness, very subtle, that lay neither in this feature nor in that, but rather, as it were, behind them all.

At last, however, the defiance assumed sway; the consideration was forgotten. "Kyt says all men love thee," she observed, critically; "now, wherefore, I wonder?" and, as Eleanor turned to her in silent surprise, "Wherefore do they love thee? Thou hast no merry jest of good comradeship, nor yet those subtler, intoxicating ways to madden a man and en-

slave him. See! hast ever looked at men like this?" She tossed her curls back and smiled roguishly, with a full consciousness of her beauty. "Or this?" She leaned forward, arms outstretched languorously, lips slightly parted, lashes drooping, as though to veil and soften the light of her eyes. And the eyes were now shimmering, alluring, full of a mystic, though physical, enthralment.

Eleanor drew back, with a tremor of repulsion.

"Oh, you recoil," said Gyll, laughing, with a somewhat hollow mirth; then, mockingly: "And why should you hold aloof? 'Tis better to be a woman than a statue—and not so wonderful a statue, after all. Believe me, 'tis the mere poetry of the thing entrances addle-pated Kyt—the mere delusion. 'Tis the rhythm wherewith he describes you to himself. He writes of you in plays, he calls you so-and-so in this and that. 'Tis all fancy. There is no real *you*. Indeed, I doubt if you are more than a dream to any man. Now, *I* am an actual, vivid desire." And so she prattled on until, at last pausing, as the firelight grew dimmer, she stretched out her arms and buried her head in them on Frazer's cloak.

Eleanor's eyes, cast down on the graceful figure, grew more tender. "I am so sorry for you," she said, "poor—" but Gyll had sprung to her feet.

"Sorry? Sorry?" she demanded, with railing sarcasm. "Your sympathies, Mistress Dare, would better be directed toward yourself. Sorry! Oh—and *poor!* Hast never seen my wardrobe—the rich broidered stomacher, the rare silk and sarsanet, the fine linen of my smocks, the gold-fringed roundels, drawn out with cypress, the silken simar lined with furs? Methinks the governor's lofty daughter herself has no such raiment. And then the ear-rings of silver and pearl, the necklaces—oh, *poor!* An

this be poverty, I rest content to be a pauper. Poor, indeed! Poor!" and she laughed as at an absurdity.

Eleanor could not comprehend the tone. She never knew whether Gyll had wilfully misinterpreted the adjective, or whether its true meaning had sunk down into the woman's heart and only hardened it the more. "I pray you keep silent," she said, in a low voice; "incontinent laughter and vanity seem little suited to our condition."

Gyll responded with a grimace that was by no means pretty, and puckered up the corners of her mouth, which had never been made for sarcasm. Nevertheless she obeyed with silence, as gradually the present circumstances were borne in upon her again, recalled, no doubt, by Eleanor's words. She looked down at Towaye, who sat near the entrance, busily occupied in extracting the marrow from a shank of venison. Then her eyes fell to the pannier behind him, and particularly upon one of the objects it contained. She lay down again upon the ground, and, gazing up at the gnarled and braided branches of the arbor's roof, appeared to have forgotten her outburst. At last, with a seeming purpose wholly foreign to her usual manner, she whispered a suggestion in Eleanor's ear, concluding with, "It is at least a chance."

"Yes, but, failing, the result would be terrible, unimaginable. Besides, he is too cautious."

Gyll shook her head knowingly. "Wait and see."

Then, seating herself near the grassy threshold of the arbor, she spoke in a louder tone, still addressing Eleanor. "Master Frazer is well provided. I see that his friends have sent him wine from the ship. A bottle's neck looks temptingly out of the pannier. Wine, wine! 'twas for gods that grapes were grown. Hast ever felt the thrill, the pleasant effects of the golden liquid?" She paused, listening. Towaye

was no longer gnawing his marrow-bone. "Venison and wine! 'Tis the dinner of kings; and, besides, when one dies of thirst as we do—" her voice fell lower, but purposely not too low for the jailer's ears. "Wait. I can reach it."

She moved nearer to the entrance, intentionally rustling leaves and grasses as she did so. Her bandaged hands reached out. But the Indian's dusky arm, with quick stealth, forestalled her. It was for this that she had hoped. Greedily, yet half fearfully, Towaye seized the bottle. She saw him turn it about in his fingers for an instant, inspecting it from neck to bottom much as a child surveys a new toy, wonderful and strange beyond comprehension. And, as a child, he seemed half in fear because of the mystery. To avoid temptation, he turned about toward the arbor, and Gyll noticed the awe underlying his desire. Presently he spoke. "In England Manteo said, 'Drink not. There is an evil spell in wine. The sunlight therein is angry at being imprisoned and not free as on the water. Behold how it affects the English, turning them to madmen. Learn, and drink not.' These were the words of Manteo. He is a wise counsellor."

Gyll laughed. "Wise, I doubt not," said she, "but deceived. Wine is rather the cure for madness —the madness of thirst, suffering, cold, and all that tortures men. I pray you give it to us."

Seeming reassured by her words, and yet more by her apparent desire to drink the mysterious liquid herself, Towaye grunted a refusal. "It is not for women," he said, cunningly. "It is for men."

She bit her lip to refrain from smiling, and drew back beyond the circle of firelight.

Taking Frazer's poniard in his right hand and still holding the bottle in his left, Towaye hesitated. Yet

suddenly an inborn passion, until to-day latent in him, but common to all the human race, predominated. His mouth watered; he must taste the forbidden fruit. The women heard a little crash, and the glass neck fell off under a blow from the poniard's blade. Frazer's own weapon, left as a precaution with the Indian, had turned against him.

Towaye drank, and drank again. Gyll peered out and saw his head fall back slowly as, gradually inverting the bottle until it stood bottom up, he drained its contents to the dregs.

At this moment Gyll Croyden did an unaccountable thing. Raising her bound hands to the crown of her head, she surprised Eleanor by untying a short scarlet ribbon that confined her hair, and instantly a radiant cascade of gold rippled and rioted downward, completely enveloping her. "Watch now a piece of play-acting. 'Twould delight Kyt's heart."

Towaye rose and entered the arbor. His features were distinctly visible, for the fire, being on the ground partly to one side of the opening, cast its gleam up even to the roof of grapes and obliquely athwart the intruder's face. His hands, now empty, were half outstretched, palms forward, fingers bent as though to grasp something.

Eleanor drew back with a cry of terror. For a moment the dark form, naked save for an apron of deerskin, stood motionless. Then, with a guttural monosyllable in his own tongue, Towaye started forward. Slowly Gyll arose and faced him. The fire, with a final high flare, lit up her hair. The long tresses, falling in ripples below her knees and completely veiling her face, shone like a flood of sunlight. But for the minute his savage eyes and heavy steps were directed to Eleanor.

Gyll spoke, and the Indian stopped short to look at

her. "Towaye," she said, in a voice that sounded far away behind the golden curtain of her hair, "hark! You stand before the Daughter of the Sun. Advance no farther, or the fire that inflames your brain shall burn your body also." She paused. Her knowledge of Indian theology was hopelessly scant and indefinite. She had heard that somewhere, in some part of this vast America, there was a people who worshipped the sun. Might not a like heliolatry be induced here, even though the Hatteras tribe acknowledged no such deity? "I, the Daughter of the Sun, command you! Leave me!" She thrust her hands through the shining locks and held them aloft as though to weave a spell. "See, Towaye. Even now the spell of the Sun enthralls thee. Thy legs tremble and waver." She swayed slightly to and fro to increase his own unsteadiness. "Thy brain whirls as the flame of a camp-fire. Thy thoughts clutch at dreams. In an instant thou shalt be consumed."

The Indian groaned and staggered backward. Her voice came lower. "Leave me, Towaye! The Daughter of the Sun hath spoken!"

He stepped back, until his knees weakened suddenly and he sank moaning to the ground. His head lay against the viny side of the natural doorway; his gleaming body stretched across the threshold. Long the heavy lids blinked with a great effort to keep awake; but the mind, utterly unaccustomed to the fumes of wine, succumbed at last. He fell asleep.

Gyll pulled her skirts above the knee, and, beckoning to her companion, would have stepped over the prone figure had not Eleanor detained her. "It cannot last. We shall lose ourselves in the woods and he will readily overtake us. Then—"

"Ay, you are right," said Gyll. "I had not

thought of that; 'twould indeed be madness." And the two women, once more seating themselves in a corner, surveyed the human barrier before them.

As the firelight waned, Gyll lay on her back again, looking up at the tracery of interlaced grape-vines which were now but vague arabesques on the leafy ceiling. The Indian's head rested on a similar vine, which formed a pendent arc, a shadowy crescent, beneath his neck. With a sidelong glance at the recumbent figure, and particularly at the head's posture, Gyll saw that the low-hanging vine on which the cranium rested was about three inches thick and very strong; moreover, it was braided like a woman's hair. "Like a woman's hair." Several times her thoughts repeated the simile, and grew more daring with the repetition. She whispered to Eleanor, and then, a second time lifting her skirts well above the knee, stepped over Towaye and out of the arbor. Her tread was wonderfully light and soundless. Near the fire she stooped and picked up something from the ground that lay near a birch bow and a bundle of flint-headed arrows. Eleanor saw her bending figure, the petticoats still raised to prevent their rustling on the leaves, the red silk hose, the golden cataract of hair, and remembered that picture always.

Gyll returned. Frazer's poniard was in her hand. Once within the arbor she appeared to hesitate as with a new purpose, and lifted her weapon as though to strike the swarthy breast, but could not. Her poised arm seemed paralyzed. Eleanor, who uttered a low whisper of horrified remonstrance, need not have done so. The impulse was there, but the masculine nerve and implacability were lacking. She resumed her first purpose. Cutting the silken band about her fellow-prisoner's wrists, she requested Eleanor to respond in kind. Their hands were at last free. Gyll

hesitated, turning the bandages about in her fingers. "Nay," she said at last, "he could easily tear them."

For a moment she smoothed out her tresses on her knee, passing a palm over them caressingly. Tears fell and mingled with the gold Her bosom was heaving. Catching up the long strand in a mass, she held it to her lips and kissed it passionately. But then her weeping ceased with a little gulp of determination, and she held out the curling ends to Eleanor. "Hold them thus," and she raised the poniard quickly to her head. In an instant the tumbling cascade had become a river of gold on the ground, glimmering in the light of the outer embers. With deft fingers Gyll twisted the locks tightly, but left both ends loose as they had fallen. Then she passed the coil over the Indian's head until it reached his throat. Next she twined it above and beneath the stout, depending branch that formed his pillow. At the nape of his neck she braided the loose strands firmly together, while in and out amid the tresses she intertwined the galloon of ribbon which had previously decked her head. Finally she made fast this strange bond with a hard knot in the ribbon whose scarlet ends were at last bound high above him to an overhanging vine. Then, with a signal to Eleanor, who was now lost in the excitement of the moment, being not a whit behind the other in courage, Gyll stepped across the barrier, and, with the poniard and birch bow in her hands, led the way to the glade's entrance.

In a moment they had regained the trail. Here they paused, listening, undecided whether to hide in the dense jungle or to follow the pathway. Towaye, however, only snored in sleep. He had moved slightly on feeling the ringlets touch his throat, but the wine still possessed him.

Night and day met. The intermediate hour of dawn brought a dim gray light to the tree-tops. Like a silver-green ocean the high surface of birch and willow foliage, stirred by the whisper of a morning breeze, murmured response from its distant border where the surf of leaves broke slowly into spray.

The sun rose and fathomed the forest obliquely where it could. By the slant of its rays the women gained some knowledge of their position, and, keeping the sun on their right, followed the trail in a northerly direction. For an hour they went on without stopping or turning to look behind.

But at last they came to a sudden halt, hearing a step even lighter than their own just beyond a bend in the trail ahead of them. Drawing to one side behind a wild hedge-row in the forest, they waited, breathless. The low rustle ceased. The person approaching them had evidently come to a stand-still. Then, through the brambles, they saw a figure, dusky and bare save for a girdle of deerskin. The head was hidden by an oak-branch. Gyll's lips came close to Eleanor's ear. "'Tis Towaye!"

"No; he is too tall."

The man stepped forward a pace and stood like a stag, listening. Eleanor grasped Gyll's arm, compelling silence, while Gyll herself nervously tightened her hold on the dagger's handle.

Again the Indian advanced, and now turned toward them. Seeing his face, the two women rose to their feet behind the wall of briars. "Manteo!"

An hour later the cressets of the fortress armory cast their glare across many grave and apprehensive faces whose concern was heightened by an enforced silence.

"Say nothing of Mistress Dare; he will consider

it his duty to go in search of her, and must not." The words were Marlowe's.

Out in the hallway, Governor White, pale and haggard, was giving orders to a small company of soldiers, who, though worn out with fatigue, were rearming themselves as though for a second combat. "To the south! O my good men, hasten! We must pursue. Even now, perchance, we are too late. But stay . . . Who comes? . . . No . . . there is no need . . . Ah, my daughter Eleanor, you are here!"

Thus, at the very moment of the governor's outstarting, which, to his despair, had been so long delayed by the battle, Eleanor returned.

"My father!" Her eyes were moist with tears, her hands caressed him, but even now she could not wait. The armory's door stood open. "Virginia, little Virginia," she said in the old, half-mechanical way, yet still very anxiously.

"She is asleep and well."

"And—" But she could not voice the question of her heart.

The governor smiled in his kindly, unknowing way. "Yes; Ananias, too, is safe. Yet a terrible battle hath been fought."

She stood for an instant mute and motionless, the dread anguish of uncertainty in her eyes. Then she hurried into the armory.

Here the first sight that met her searching glance was her child sleeping in Margery Harvie's arms. She bent over and kissed it on the forehead—once; then turned to a group of men who stood in a corner encircling a central, recumbent figure that was resting on a bare settle of oak.

A low moan rose in her heart, and whether or not it escaped her lips she never knew.

On the settle lay John Vytal, prostrate and uncon-

scious, his left arm extended to the floor, to which his half-sheathed sword had fallen, the belt having been unbuckled that his corselet might be unloosed. His fingers tenaciously grasped the scabbard. The right hand lay across his breast, which had been bared that a chirurgeon, who stood near by, might listen to the heart-beats. Under the head of the wounded man a folded cloak had been placed as a pillow, and his morion, having been removed, revealed a great black and gray flecked mane of hair, brushed back to cool his forehead. The brow itself, streaked with crimson, showed a deep line from temple to temple where the helmet had cut into it. The face, as though chiselled in bronze, was still stern and relentless, save for a grim, triumphant look of victory that shone in the sharp features like the cresset-light across his sword.

Marlowe stood erect, watching him, until suddenly a voice, inarticulate, low, and questioning, seemed to break the spell that bound them all to the depths of anxious silence.

Marlowe turned. "Thank God!" he said, "you are saved. Speak to him." And, with all the relief in the poet's voice, there was a note of pain; for he had read her eyes.

"Captain Vytal."

The soldier stirred as though in an abyss of sleep, his breast heaving slightly.

"John Vytal." The name was spoken in a low voice, yet, far away in the world that sound and sight fathom not by utterance or gaze, but only by their meaning, one spirit was calling to another.

The captain opened his eyes slowly.

"Thanks be to Heaven!" And Marlowe turned to Eleanor. "Your salvation is his as well."

Vytal's lips parted. "Salvation? What mean

you by salvation?" He forced himself to sit upright, and his voice rose harsh as a night wind. "Has Mistress Dare been nigh to danger?"

Neither Marlowe nor Eleanor made answer, but Gyll Croyden, who now had joined the group, replied, laughing: "Ay, that have we both. Master Ralph Contempt and Towaye snared us cunningly, but a wench's wit outdid them, and, alas! a wench's hair."

She stroked her close-cut curls dolefully.

Vytal staggered to his feet, and, facing Marlowe, questioned him like a judge of the Inquisition: "Wherefore didst thou not make this known to me?"

The poet met his gaze unflinchingly. "I thought—"

"Thought!" The word was repeated in a frigid, biting tone. "Thought! 'Twas not your right to think. The daughter of our governor was in jeopardy."

"Yes, captain, and our colony also. I deemed it advisable not to pit one duty against another. On coming ashore after the battle I would have told you, but you had swooned."

Vytal looked at him in silence; then, finally sinking down again to a sitting posture, "You were right, Kyt," and his eyes met Eleanor's—"'Twas for our colony."

"I pray you rest," she said. "Your strength is spent."

But he sat bolt-upright and made as if to rebuckle his sword-belt in a dazed, automatic way. "Nay, madam; it is unimpaired."

At about this time a solitary man, far to the southward, struck inland from the shore. It was Frazer, returning from a defeat to what he believed was to be the scene of a conquest which should retrieve it.

On coming to the glade, however, and to the arbor

in which Eleanor and Gyll Croyden had been imprisoned, he stood still before the threshold in mute astonishment. There, near the ashes of a fire, lay Towaye, basking in the sunlight, sound asleep. Amazedly the youth started forward and peered into the arbor. It was empty. Assuring himself of this, he stamped and swore roundly, but, with a second glance at the slumbering Indian, his expression changed. A sense of humor asserted itself above chagrin and even astonishment in the boyish eyes. "How now?" he laughed. "'Tis a court masque. Lo, a golden necklace and beribboned peruke garnish our Lucifer!" He shook Towaye none too gently with his foot. The Indian, rolling over, rubbed his eyes and strove to sit upright, but his bond held him fast to the stout grape-vine. "I dreamed that I tried once before," he said, in sleepy bewilderment; "but the Daughter of the Sun hath woven a spell,"

"Fool!" ejaculated Frazer.

"Nay, no fool. 'Twas she and the captive sunlight which, escaping its bondage, entered my body at her command and overpowered it."

Frazer's eyes, falling on an empty bottle, brought him comprehension, and his thoughts went back to another bottle which but recently had worked his own failure. The remembrance decreased his severity. He unbraided the peruke, "like a barber," he said, and bade the Indian join him in pursuing the women.

At this Sir Walter St. Magil, who had followed him from the shore, entered the opening. "I have come in search of you."

"Unbidden!" returned Frazer, hotly.

St. Magil smiled. "You will not remonstrate on hearing the cause."

"Nay, for I have not the time. No cause delays me."

"Whither go you, then?"

Frazer made no answer.

"Ah, for some *liaison*, I doubt not. Mark me, a woman will work your downfall."

The youth laughed carelessly, and would have gone away, but his friend detained him. "A ship from Spain has joined the *Madre de Dios*. We return across the seas. Philip will invade England."

Frazer started, trembled. His cheeks flushed, a new light shone in the blue eyes. The whole expression read: *Ambition*.

"Invade England!"

"Yes; with an armada so great that the issue is foregone. Naturally, your Highness"—the title came half ironical, half serious—"will want to step first on English soil, no more as Ralph Contempt or Frazer."

"Nay, no more." The echo sounded dreamy.

"Now," pursued St. Magil, "we have bigger fish to fry than these of Virginia. Roanoke is but a minnow, England a whale."

Frazer's lips parted, smiling. "I have had many names," he said, "but the whale unpleasantly suggests a new one—Jonah! Now, a minnow—" but he was only babbling words detached from thoughts, all-expectant, bewildered, glad, eager, like a child on Christmas Eve.

"Your Highness," observed the other, "will make a merry—"

"Hush, Sir Walter, you tempt Fortune."

CHAPTER XVI

"What, rebels, do you shrink and sound retreat?"
—MARLOWE, in *Edward the Second.*

WE come now to a mile-stone in the road of Time, a mere pebble it may seem to some, but to the colony of Roanoke it marked a sudden turning in Life's pathway.

Perhaps nothing is more unaccountably inconsistent than the action of men under new and strange conditions. As there is no precedent to predict the issue, reason falls back upon itself, and fails; the unexpected happens. Even keen perception and an intimate knowledge of human nature confound the rule with its exception, trying to solve the problem by its proofs, or to prove it by the solution.

The colonists of Roanoke had fought bravely for their rights. Surely men like these could be abashed by nothing. But to make war against a present, actual enemy and against obscure, slow-moving Destiny are different matters. Many are fitted for one or the other contest, few for both.

On a morning early in September numerous planters and soldiers, led by Ananias Dare, stood before the house of Governor White. The governor himself was in his doorway, listening sadly to their appeal.

"We have been so weakened in numbers," said Ananias, "that there is but one chance left. "It is true the Spanish ship has not reappeared, but who shall say that a force far more powerful may not

at any time return against us? The *Admiral* and fly-boat go back, as you know, to England, necessarily in charge of Captain Pomp, who alone is fitted to command them, and of several mariners. This, however, is not enough. Let us *all* return."

The governor looked from the face of his son-in-law to the many others, and, with dismay, found only agreement in their expressions. "What mean you?" he asked, helplessly. "Cannot all the planters and chartered officers wait yet longer? Others will come, I doubt not, from England without our seeking. To return as the earlier settlers did will cast discredit not only on us, but upon this great land of which a part is now our country's." He paused, seeking vainly for looks of acquiescence.

"Nay, we can return anon," said Ananias, "with more husbandmen to superintend the raising of our crops; with more soldiers to defend us, and artificers to enlarge our town; with additional supplies, of which we are in so sore a need—" he broke off suddenly, his wife appearing at an open window near the door. The child was in her arms. There was a long silence, but at last the governor spoke again.

"Some must, of a surety, stay. This dominion is a charge not to be forsaken utterly. Who, then, must needs depart?"

Ananias hesitated, seeing the question repeated in Eleanor's eyes. For a time, as the governor searched their faces, no man gave answer, a few because the plan really pained them, more merely realizing that it would wound another. Moreover, they felt a certain shame born of the prearranged suggestion. At this moment Christopher Marlowe and Roger Prat, having left Vytal in the fortress, joined the group, curious to learn what was going forward.

At length Ananias summoned up his courage.

"*We* must go," he said, in a voice that strove to hide eagerness beneath a tone suggesting sacrifice. "You and Eleanor, I, and as many others as choose to accompany us."

The governor's kindly eyes grew moist. "I go?" he asked, falteringly—"I?" He questioned them with a sorrowful look that embraced the whole gathering; but the men nodded their heads gravely. "Who, then, would remain to govern and foster you? I should be the stigma and laughing-stock of England. Our charter is in my name and in the names of my twelve assistants. Who, I ask you, has the right to become governor in my stead?"

To this the voice of all gave response, with one accord: "John Vytal."

"Yes," echoed Ananias, "John Vytal. He is best fitted for it; you for the request at court. Your influence, your—" but he was suddenly interrupted.

A clear, feminine voice spoke from the window, and Eleanor handed her child to Margery Harvie, who stood within the room. "It shall not be! Leave our colony, our home? Leave that which we have bought with so much blood and suffering? Desert our sacred trust? Cancel by cowardice the debt we owe to God and the queen? Oh, my friends, we came not hither for this. I beseech you, I command you, consider, and fling not your honor thus away!" Her eyes were flashing now, their first cold scorn of Ananias lost in love for the people, yet in burning indignation at their unforeseen demand. One hand was on the sill, the other on the casement at her side. Her cheeks, first pale with contempt for the spokesman, were flushed now with deep crimson; her voice was all the more eloquent of its tremor. "Can you not look beyond the present? Can you not see that, as my father says, many more will follow us from

England? Sir Walter Raleigh hath promised that new expeditions and increased numbers shall share our home if we succeed. *If we succeed!* Can there be an 'if' before that word 'succeed'? Was there an 'if' in your hearts when you fought against our Spanish foe? Nay, nay, my brothers. Failure must not be within our ken. Have you no care for the great future? Is it no joy to think that by our own efforts a vast nation may build upon the corner-stone we lay? Who knows? Are we not perchance sowing that England and all the world may reap some unimaginable benefit thereby? The land is fair—you know better than I its bounteous offerings and boundless scope—and, being fair, shall we then desecrate it with the smirch of cowardice? Oh, my friends, I pray you reconsider!" Her voice sank lower in the final plea.

A dull murmur ran through the group, whether of approbation or disapproval she could not tell.

Marlowe started. "It will kill Vytal," he muttered, as though to himself, and, on hearing this, the stout soldier beside him looked bewildered.

"Kill Vytal!" repeated Roger. "Gad, man, what mean you?" But now his eyes, rolling up to look at Eleanor, showed that suddenly he had understood.

Then Roger Prat seized the thread of the Fates in his own impulsive hand and wove it into a strange pattern, whether for ill or good, none could tell.

Swaggering forward, he elbowed his way through the crowd until he stood before the governor. Then he spoke in a low voice. "It cannot be averted. I have seen men thus bewitched on the eve of battle. I have cursed, laughed, coaxed, scolded, all without avail. And I, you know, have great influence, both with sword and—and tabor, which is scarce less to be considered. But retreat gets into their quak-

ing hearts. The mischief is irreparable. Therefore, under your favor, acting for Captain Vytal, I will divide them as is my custom in a war—they who would go and they who would remain. Thus we can know men from chickens."

The governor, sighing, hesitated. "Must it be?" he asked, half aloud.

"We shall see," said Prat, and White inclined his head in permission.

Roger turned and faced the gathering. "Divide yourselves, my masters. His Excellency commands that they who would desert—I mean return—stand still, while they who would remain at Roanoke under Captain Vytal come nearer."

The crowd wavered, only Marlowe and Dyonis Harvie stepping forward.

"Ah," observed Prat, "a goodly throng! One, two, and I make three; then the captain, Hugh Rouse, and King Lud make six. Body o' me! 'Tis indeed an invincible company left to defend the settlement." He wagged his head, and, turning to the governor, stood at salute between Christopher and Dyonis. "We are ready, your Excellency."

There was something so pathetically appealing in the humor which had marshalled three men as though they were an army that the consciences of many on-lookers smote them, until first one, then another and another, went forward and stood beside the military file. Before long some threescore were elbow to elbow, back to breast, in a double line, not unlike in formation and precision that which but a few days before had so bravely defended the *Admiral*.

Prat stepped out from the ranks, and, wheeling, faced the company. One hand was on his sword-hilt, the other he waved aloft. "Thank you," he said; "I shall play to you my own new song called

'Roanoke' in reward for this, and you shall see King Lud dance for very joy. Your consciences, moreover, shall tickle you, which spitefully pricked before." Then, pushing his way through the double file, he stood before the rear group, who, headed by Ananias Dare, hung their heads in sullen silence. "The rear-guard," said Prat, surveying them with contemptuous irony, "hath also its uses. It makes our front the more glorious by comparison; it inspires thankfulness in our hearts that we are not of it. A lion, now, might not be half so proud had he not a frightened hare to look upon." His manner grew more serious. "You are determined to leave?"

"Yes, determined," replied Ananias, who like most weak natures had his moments of fitful obstinacy.

And the men, in concert, echoed, "Yes."

Once more Eleanor spoke. "There shall be no strife," she said. "We cannot stay you. Go, then; but my father and I remain."

"Nay, nay," came from the voices not of those who were to leave, but of the others who had elected to cast in their lot with Vytal's. "Nay, the governor must go to seek assistance, and return hither for our salvation. That is sure."

Eleanor's voice broke. "My people, you hurt me to the quick."

Prat, doffing his cap, turned to her. "It must be," he said, mournfully. "Oh, indeed, it must be! I have collogued with them, I have lost at dice, I have harangued them, but all in vain." He went forward, wheeled about again, and addressed the group of volunteers. "Comrades, I have but one suggestion." He cast a sidelong glance at Ananias. "Master Dare must stay. We cannot spare the governor's assistant." The men smiled grimly. "And,

if I may say so, Mistress Dare should likewise remain among us as a—a kind of hostage from his Excellency, her father, to assure us that he will return with aid."

This was the moment in which Roger meddled with Fate.

The governor's benevolent face went a shade paler as he looked at the corpulent soldier. "Then you, too, Prat, are against us?" But Roger only wagged his head and rolled his eyes as who should say, "Interpret the action as you will, I, at least, feel no compunction."

Eleanor scanned his face, a new flush mounting to her cheeks. Her mind was in a turmoil. Great forces strove one against another in her heart; on the one side her powerful filial devotion, which impelled her to depart from England with her father; on the other her love for the colony, her unflinching resolution to stand by it, her scorn for the husband who sought only selfishly to escape; and, with all these—but no; she would not define that control even to herself. Yet deep, vivid, merciless, a name in her soul defined it whether she would or not.

She said nothing, but withdrew from the window to caress her child. A tear fell on little Virginia's forehead, and then soft fingers wiped it away as though to obliterate the symbol of Sorrow's baptism.

And now a low, broken murmur rose from without.

"Yes, as a kind of hostage," said one.

"A token of good faith," added another. "And she shall be as a queen unto us."

"Then, surely," observed a third, "his Excellency will come back with succor."

"It is well."

"And the *brave* Master Dare must share our fate."

"Ha! That is best of all."

"Roger Prat speaks wisely."

"Ay," echoed many, "your round head, Roger, is not all whim."

He laughed and rejoined Marlowe. "Your master will be angry," said the poet.

"Not in his heart, Master Christopher."

The gathering dispersed, casting amused glances at Ananias, who, now pale, mortified, and desperate, entered the house for his only antidote against remorse and fear.

The governor made way for him on the threshold and stood for some minutes watching the retreating figures of his colonists. Then he, too, withdrew slowly, and his step for the first time suggested infirmity, his face age.

On the following morning Vytal met Eleanor Dare near the shore. "You are going?" he asked.

"No."

"'Twould save you from many hardships."

"I count them blessings. Few women are allowed to suffer in so good a cause. Their pain shows no result."

"Nay, Mistress Dare, the effect lies too deep perchance for mortal eyes to see it. I was once wont to consider women so many smocks and kirtles that clothed the air, but lately mine eyes have read the truth." His manner was in no way passionate, but only deep with reverence and admiration. The passion lay iron-bound within him. Only his eyes could not utterly conceal its presence; and, looking up to them, she became once more a child. With all others she was a woman, often imperious and always perfectly at ease, yet with this man she was forever

forced to assume the defensive, not against him, but herself. She looked up at him now for the first time with a glance of analysis. Until to-day she had never considered Vytal's character in detail. Hitherto he had been a force, intangible, but dominant, like the tide or wind. But now that emergencies and crises had revealed her heart to her mind, against all that mind's resistance, he, too, became actual, and despite herself she knew him to be the one man whom she could love. Yet the word "love" was unutterable even in her depths. She called it by no name, nor applied a word to his own devotion. Only the thought came to her, as she met his look, that this inexplicable, taciturn Fate bending over her would become a child like herself beneath the touch of a requited—but even then she interrupted her thoughts with speech. "I could not have consented to leave our colony, even if Roger Prat—" she hesitated.

Vytal's manner grew more stern. "Roger Prat? What has he to do with it?"

She looked troubled. "Oh, naught, believe me—I think he—but no—I mean—"

"What?"

"He believed 'twas for the best, and so he demanded that I—should stay."

Vytal grasped his sword-hilt. "Is 't possible he dared to interfere? Do you mean 'twas Prat suggested hostages? Can it be my own man who hath exposed you to the hazard of remaining?"

"No, stay, Captain Vytal. Harm not the fellow. Dost not—" But she broke off suddenly, her head drooping to hide the deep flush which had mounted to her cheeks.

"'Twas impertinence," declared Vytal, as though to himself. "Nay, more, it was profanation to thwart

the will of Heaven, by which you would have been saved from this cruel life."

She looked up at him again, a wistful doubt in her eyes. "Then you—would have—me return?"

He drew himself to his full height in the old soldierly way, as though facing an ordeal. "I would."

"Wherefore?" The word came in a low whisper, as though a woman's heart were sinking with the voice to endless silence.

"I consider *your* happiness, and not—" He paused and turned to leave.

She spoke no detaining word, but only stood watching him as he walked away to the fortress, and her eyes were no longer haunted by misgiving.

"Roger."

"Ay."

"Hereafter ignore the dictates of impulse save in matters of your calling. Obey my commands alone, or seek another friend."

"But, captain—"

"Stay, I ask no explanation nor apology. The thing is done."

At sunrise the whole colony, save the governor and his daughter, having assembled on the shore, was divided into two parties—those who were lading cock-boats and barges with provisions prior to their departure, and those who merely assisted in the embarkation with a secondary interest, listless and mutely sad.

Soon, like the pinions of two great sea-fowl, widespread to bear them upward from a billow, the sails of the fly-boat and *Admiral*, mounting from yard to yard, held all eyes at gaze.

Prat, watching them with a wry face, turned to

Marlowe, who stood beside him. "Damned portents!" he exclaimed.

"Nay, Roger, they are but vultures awaiting to bear away the corpse of Courage." Prat eyed him with a kind of wonder. "Or," pursued the poet, carelessly, "those sails are the flags of truce we wave to Destiny."

"Master Kyt," asked Roger, with a look of unprecedented embarrassment, "is 't a hard thing to write poesy?"

Marlowe, still in abstraction, failed to note the preposterous suggestion that underlay the query. He made answer seemingly to himself. "'Tis easy to indite the 'Jigging Conceits of Rhyming Mother Wits,'" he observed, quoting from the prelude to his "Tamburlaine."* "It is within man's compass to make a 'mighty line' or so; but to write poetry is impossible."

"Nay, but you yourself, Master Christopher—"

"No, not I, nor any one can scan the lines engrailed by a golden pen on the scroll of sunset, or echo the music of a breeze."

The soldier looked mournful, his chin sinking on his chest until a triple fold submerged it. "I would fain have invented a poem myself," he avowed, gloomily. "And, indeed, have written a song of the men of Roanoke. Lack-a-day! 'tis but a jigging mother of rhyme, I fear, and poorly done."

Marlowe surveyed him in silence for a moment, then laughed gayly and turned away.

At the same moment a flutter of white scraps, like torn paper, fell to Roger's boots.

The gathering that lined the water's edge was now divided in the centre, and Governor White walked

* This prelude was written in scorn of his predecessors, and to herald his own conception of a loftier English drama.

between the ranks, smiling to one and another on either side to conceal the sadness of his farewell. As he came half-way to the shore, Marlowe went forward and stopped him. Holding out a heavy packet, the poet spoke in a low voice. "I pray you see to it that this is delivered to Edward Alleyn, an actor of plays, who dwells in the Blackfriars, or, if he be not readily found, then, I pray you, leave it at the sign of 'The Three Bibles,' in charge of Paul Merfin, a bookseller. It was from his shop that I joined John Vytal in the fight for your daughter's honor. I doubt not you will leave this there as my reward. The packet contains certain stage conceits begun in England and finished here."

"It shall be delivered," said the governor. "I am, indeed, happy thus to be made a humble sharer in the building of your fame."

The poet smiled. "Fame!" he said. "'Tis not for that I sing."

And now Governor White made his way to the water, while many gathered sorrowfully around him to place letters in his charge.

Eleanor went down to the sea hand-in-hand with her father. Those who were to leave had already boarded the two vessels, with the exception of a sailor and Captain Pomp, who stood, befeathered hat in hand, beside the governor's small-boat.

As John White was about to step over the gunwale of this craft, Vytal approached him. "Since it must be," said the soldier, "I have sought at least to exonerate you from all slander in England and charges of desertion. The Oxford preacher hath writ this," and he handed a scroll of paper to the governor. It read as follows:

"May it please you, her Majesty's subjects of England, we, your friends and countrymen, the planters in Virginia, do by

these let you and every [one] of you to understand that for the present and speedy supply of certain our known and apparent lacks and needs, most requisite and necessary for the good and happy planting of us, or any other in this land of Virginia, we all of one mind and consent have most earnestly entreated and incessantly requested John White, Governor of the planters in Virginia, to pass into England for the better and more assured help, and setting forward of the foresaid supplies, and knowing assuredly that he both can best and will labor and take pains in that behalf for us all, and he not once but often refusing it for our sakes, and for the honor and maintenance of the action hath at last, though much against his will, through our importunacy yielded to leave his government and all his goods among us, and himself in all our behalfs to pass into England, of whose knowledge and fidelity in handling this matter, as all others, we do assure ourselves by these presents, and will you to give all credit thereunto, the 25 of August, 1587."*

Eleanor had already said good-bye in private, but once more she kissed her father, pressed his hand, whispered in his ear, and then, as he stepped into the cock-boat which awaited him, returned to her baby, that lay crowing in its nurse's arms.

"Body o' me," said a voice near by. "The prow hangs a-land. Dame Cock-boat refuses to be gone. Hi, little Rouse, come help them."

The two joined their fellow, who, under Captain Pomp's directions, was striving to launch the craft, which had been nearly deserted by an ebb-tide.

"Whist!" said Roger in Hugh's ear, "we'll make Master Dare give aid."

Hugh looked at the assistant and saw a sorry picture. "'Tis a ghost," he exclaimed, "not a man in flesh and fell."

"The corpse of Courage," added Prat, after the poet's manner.

* From the personal account of Governor White, in *Hakluyt's Voyages*.

The man they discussed seemed like a ghost indeed, that would fade with the mist when the sun rose higher. His face, pallid and haggard, was turned toward the cock-boat as to a last resort.

"He would leave," observed Rouse, while, side by side with Roger, he pushed the governor's craft slowly forward. For a moment the keel ceased grating on the shingle, and Prat turned to Ananias. "Oh, Master Dare, I pray you give us aid! 'Tis a most unconscionable task!" At which one or two others near the cock-boat exchanged winks and covert smiles. They showed no mercy. Dare, between the two soldiers, was forced himself to cut the last thread between danger and safety.

The prow fell free, and finally the boat was floating. Then the on-lookers saw Ananias stagger, or, rather, almost spring forward, having, they supposed, lost his balance as the craft shot out from land. But Hugh's immense hand, grasping his belt, pulled him backward to save him (the by-standers believed) from a ducking. Rouse and Prat walked away arm-in-arm. "Well done, midget; I had not thought so dense a brain would fathom his intention."

Slowly the *Admiral* and fly-boat sailed away, their hulls, bulwarks, and deck-houses vanishing beyond the inlet from the ocean until only the shrouds remained, and now the whole colony had left the shore, save one woman. Long she watched the sails that, like white clouds, seemed to grow smaller, and at last dissolve entirely beneath the eastern sun.

Finally a naked horizon met Eleanor's eyes at the edge of a brassy sea, and she turned back to the town.

CHAPTER XVII

"What we have done our heart-blood shall maintain."
—MARLOWE, in *Edward the Second.*

"Thy words are swords."
—MARLOWE, in *Tamburlaine.*

TO those who, long afterwards, recalled the months and months that followed Governor White's departure there was no clear, consecutive reminiscence in the mind's eye. Only one or two vivid scenes, enacted in those anxious days, graved themselves on memory. All else was but a medley of hours and seasons, and even years, quick-changing, confused, monotonous yet varied, listless yet portentous and pregnant—the fœtus of the Future in the Present's womb. Hope burned brightly, waned, flared again, flickered, and seemed to die. For even Hope cannot live by Hope alone forever; only grief is self-sustaining. And grief came to the colony of Roanoke. Pestilence, tempests and privations, famine, drought, and mortality, all conspired in turn against their one invincible enemy whose name is Courage.

A desperate, absorbing question haunted the faces of men, women, and children; a question first asked in words, next mutely from eye to eye, then not at all. *When? when?* The word holds all the meaning of existence, and the meaning is a question. Despair is the death of Hope; Resignation, the deep-cut grave. Yet from the grave a ghost returns to whisper, "Then."

The ghost of Hope still haunted Roanoke Island. Surely some day the resigned yet watchful eyes would see a sail to the eastward. First the settlers said "To-morrow," then "Next month," and at last, "Within a year John White will bring deliverance."

But summers and winters passed until two whole years had gone, and speculation was eschewed by all as vain self-torture.

Crops failed; husbandry languished. Life at last came to a low ebb. This may seem unaccountable when one considers that about threescore able-bodied men, with perhaps a dozen women and children, were not castaways without shelter, but well-housed settlers. Yet the fact remains undeniable; and the cause is not far to seek. Hope had made the colonists dependent on itself. They had looked for a speedy deliverance. Without this expectation their industry, at the outset, after Governor White's departure, would not have waned, but increased. Perceiving no assistance possible from an outside source, the little company, relying on its own endeavors, would have striven to shape the future independently. But that sail, ever in the mind's eye, allured them. Save for two or three men who were, above all, self-reliant, the colony, before now, would have perished. Fortunately, one of these had learned to depreciate the kindness of Destiny. In his mental vision there was no sail to the eastward, nor ever would be unless a ship actually appeared on the horizon. Experience, head-master of this school-boy world, could boast of at least one graduate on Roanoke.

"Manteo, the end is near. I have sought for over two years to 'stablish ourselves firmly, so that, even were John White's absence indefinitely prolonged,

we might yet survive. But your land considers us aliens. The end is near."

"Yes, my brother, for that reason I have come hither from the island of Croatan. The English are not aliens, but friends and brethren. Our crops shall be their crops, our habitation theirs as well. My name is Manteo, yet also Lord of Roanoke.* Ask your people to come and be my children on the isle of Croatan. Here the tongue of the earth cleaves to its mouth. All things die thirsting. The springs of fresh water are spent and run not; the dust chokes their throats, and still no cloud appears. Even the sky panteth. I say to you, come away."

"But, Manteo, wherefore? Is 't any better at your abode?"

"It is; for at Croatan the forest waters bring laughter from the heart of the world, and are never hushed. The whisper of Roanoke's well-springs is lip-deep and meaningless, while we of Croatan hear a spirit singing, 'Come.' The song is to you, for we are there already. I repeat it: 'Come.'"

"But your crops are needed for your kinsmen."

"Yes; ye are our kinsmen."

"So be it. On the morrow, then, thy lot is ours as well."

At noon the colonists assembled near the fortress, while John Vytal spoke to them. By the captain's side stood Manteo, utterly impassive, and, next to the Indian, Christopher Marlowe, seemingly wrapped in a high abstraction. In the foremost line of the small half-circle Hugh Rouse and Roger Prat were intently listening; while from a knoll, apart from

* He had been created a peer by Raleigh's preferment, and was the first to receive a title in America.

the group, yet well within earshot, Eleanor Dare watched the speaker. About the foot of the mound a little girl, apparently about three years old, played with drooping wild-flowers. Like a butterfly just from the cocoon, she flittered hither and thither, with uncertain, hesitating motion, yet a grace so light and aerial that seemingly a thread of sunlight could have bound her, since no breeze was there to carry her away. Though actual gossamer wings were unaccountably lacking, a gossamer spirit was hers, ethereal, as if born of a maiden's dream. Yet, as the wing of a butterfly winces if the flower it touches droops, there was that in her which told vaguely of sorrow, as though in the past, long before her earthly life, her devotion for some one had been repelled. And now even these strange wild ferns and unnamed blossoms of the field about her hung their heads and turned away. Yet she was of them. Was the sadness an inborn, unconscious memory, a dim result arising from the fact that her father had been spurned, and that of the contempt and repugnance in which her mother had held him, long months before Virginia's birth, she was the offspring?

These were the thoughts and questions in the mind of Marlowe as he turned to watch the child at play. Her mystic sadness was not the effect of an infancy amid hardship and affliction. He believed she would never be touched by tangible sorrows. He pictured her as grown to womanhood, yet never amenable to ordinary grief. No; it was only that the maiden's dream from which this child seemed sprung had ended with an awakening from vague and roseate fancies to a cold, remorseless fact. The *soul* of the child had no father; she was not conceived of love. The world holds many like her, beautiful and sound in body, and in spirit beautiful but incomplete.

As the poet watched her playing about her mother's feet, with all the babble and waywardness of blithesome elfinry, his thoughts grew more abstracted. He no longer saw the sunny head, the peony lips, and the little oval face, mirthful but very pale; he no longer compared the features to Eleanor's, noting the surface likeness, the difference underneath; he no longer drew a distinction between the spiritual deeps of the mother's eyes and the mystical prescience of the daughter's, which lay also beneath a veil of hazel light.

He was thinking of the little one as Virginia Dare, the first-born white child of America. She became a symbol to him whose meaning he could but dimly understand. He considered all the sacrifice by which she had come into the world, the sacrifice and suffering in which she had been reared, but by no poetic hieromancy could he read her meaning. A fate-spun thread of gold joining the East and West; a mystery, a portent, a promise—all these she seemed to Marlowe, yet in meaning so vague and futuritial as to be beyond all interpretation not divine.

Suddenly, however, the poet's thoughts forsook Virginia, both as the child of Eleanor and of Fate. Vytal's clear, short words had forced themselves into his mind.

"Manteo hath asked us to make our abode with him and his people at Croatan. In your name I have answered, 'Yes.' Here we wait and die, one by one, of sickness, drought, and famine. My sword hath been ever ready, and God grant may be always, to lead you and defend our trust. But against disease and starvation not all the arms of Spain and England could prevail. Yet, rather than desert this realm forever, mark you, 'twere better to leave our bones as centronels of the town. If we cannot till

the soil and wrest a livelihood therefrom, I say, let us mingle with it our dust, that others, who come after, may sow their seed therein and reap a harvest of fidelity. Even then we should at least have stayed and been of use to men. We must leave an heritage behind us, a will and testament, written perchance in blood, and ineffaceable. This is our sacred duty. Yet there hath been talk among you of building a vessel and taking to the sea. So soon as you begin I shall end the labor with fire and the thing you term a 'bodkin.' Call me tyrant an you will; I care not. Stab me at night, build your boats —even then I care not. My will, at least, shall have stood to the last for duty.

"I see your eyes gaping with surprise. 'Tis because my voice in this harangue sounds strange. You consider me—deny it not—a silent wolf. Perhaps I am so. But sometimes words are needed for speakers of words. Otherwise I would have said, 'Come,' and led you, without further parley, to Croatan. But you would not have understood; you would have murmured. Listen, then. We go to the island of Croatan on the morrow and live with the Hatteras tribe. Let those who are fearful bury deep their most valued possessions; but all may bring with them what they will. The vinteners, husbandmen, and gardeners must take their implements, the artificers their tools. You, Hugh Rouse, and you, Prat, superintend the conveyance of our ordnance, half of which shall be taken, and half left in the fort. You, Dyonis, will make the barges ready and man the pinnace. You, Kyt Marlowe, carve the name Croatan beside the main entrance to the town, high up on a tree-trunk, in fair capitals, that, if the governor do ever return, he may know of our whereabouts and come to Croatan.

"My friends, the exodus is unavoidable. Yet we still garrison a hemisphere."

He paused and scanned their faces, while for a moment all looked up at him as though fearing to break the spell which for the first time in their knowledge had given him tongue. But presently several men appeared on the threshold of a neighboring cabin, in which Gyll Croyden lived, and from which, until now, peals of incongruous laughter and the rattle of dice had proceeded at frequent intervals. Foremost in the doorway stood Ananias Dare, who, after hesitating a minute, joined the larger gathering. "What is afoot?" he asked of those nearest to him.

"We shall be soon," laughed Prat, "for to-morrow we leave Roanoke and join the Hatteras Indians."

"God's pity! They will exterminate us."

At this Manteo, who until now had remained immobile as stone, started forward, but Vytal, with a word, restrained him, and, turning to the assistant, spoke in a low voice, so that Eleanor might not hear his accusation. "Master Dare, you insult a benefactor. Manteo is no murderer, but a generous host. Bridle your tongue." The tone was authoritative and coldly harsh, but the very cowardice of Ananias, paradoxically enough, gave him moments of obstinate courage. Many there are who fight desperately to retreat: fear is bold in its own interests.

"Who gave you command?" he queried. "'Twas I suggested to the governor that John Vytal should assume control. My voice, therefore, deserves the heed of all; and I say build a ship. By all means let us haste to England." He turned at the last and addressed the women nearest to him, while the hands of Prat and Rouse went impulsively to their sword-hilts, and their glance hung on Vytal' s face, asking permission to end the matter immediately

with summary decision. But the captain only scrutinized the group searchingly.

"Master Dare," ventured Roger, "harangues the women. His words are not for us. Oh ho, good dames, give ear. Ye're to man a ship—*woman* a ship, I mean. Now, one shall be Mistress Jack-Woman, another Dame Captain, another Sailing-Mistress. In troth, 'tis a lusty crew."

Ananias turned on him angrily. "Sirrah, have a care, else you shall feel the grip of a hand-lock within the hour."

But Roger responded with a laugh. "Now, what's a hand-lock, Master Assistant? You've so often made mention of the thing as befitting my exalted station, that methinks 'tis time it were proven real."

He would have given his raillery free rein and run on further, but Vytal interrupted him. "Desist, Roger; your tongue runs riot most unseemly. The irons are real indeed, and here's a hand shall lock them an you show not greater deference to superiors."

Ananias smiled at this with triumph, and resumed his appeal. "I ask you, my masters, is it not far better to risk a thousand storms by sea than encounter death by torture or slow starvation? I doubt not the Indian chieftain is well meaning, but so also is Sir Walter Raleigh; yet to what a pass hath his invitation brought us! The time is come to save ourselves." He hesitated, for at this moment his daughter, the little Virginia, who had chased a humming-bird across the square, stopped in her flight and looked up at him. When his eyes fell to hers he winced perceptibly, and then his face, flushing for an instant, seemed superlatively beautiful under the recall of a lost masculinity. But suddenly his glance wandered to Eleanor, who stood aloof watch-

ing him, and the old, drawn, pallid look reasserted itself, whereat, slowly, he turned on his heel and, with eyes shamefully cast down, re-entered the cabin of Gyll Croyden.

"On the morrow," said Vytal, "we go to Croatan."

CHAPTER XVIII

"His looks do measure heaven and dare the gods:
His fiery eyes are fixed upon the earth."
—MARLOWE, in *Tamburlaine.*

OFTENTIMES the necessity for mere physical exertion alleviates the dull pain of hopelessness and induces men to forget themselves. The renewed activity may be long delayed and unsought, but when at last it comes the change is everywhere apparent. For months the colony had been subject to a kind of lethargy, a spirit of retrospection and dark foreboding, which even the endeavors of Vytal and his men could not dispel. But on the day of exodus there was not even an attempt at prophecy. The tangible present became paramount. Each man, with a few exceptions, acted for himself, and thus for all. Even selfishness, if it be positive, may result in a benefit widespread beyond its own intent.

The sun, rising slowly, seemed at last to pause and balance itself on the edge of the flaming sea, like an oven's red-hot lid for a moment lifted from its hole. The sky, papery, blue, and shallow—a ceiling painted azure in clumsy imitation of the heavens—seemed so low as to shut out air. One might almost have expected to see strips of the blue peel off in places, cracked by the consuming heat. The bosom of the sea lay motionless, as if the breath of life had gone forever; and the corpse of the earth was carrion for the sun.

But the toilers persisted. The emigration had begun.

For hours and hours the boats proceeded on their way until day was nearly gone, and at last, as if Fate would deride the colony, a cloud, for which all had prayed so long, crept up over the horizon. A low, muffled roar came across the water, and, in the distance, rain fell.

Ananias Dare, who, with Vytal, Marlowe, and Manteo, stood in the bow of the pinnace, suggested that all should immediately return. But Vytal refused. "It would be months," he affirmed, "even under the most favorable conditions, before our planters could replenish the storehouse."

At this moment a louder roar than hitherto proclaimed the cloud's approach, and a pall of darkness covered the sea. The effect was memorable. A second picture graved itself on observant minds. To the east, stretching out interminably on one side, lay the sea, chopping and black as ink. To the west, the land, sun-clad, extended broad and limitless. Hope and Despair, Life and Death, were keeping tryst at the brink of ocean. But not for long. Suddenly a jagged light gashed the heavens, and, with a terrific detonation, a ball of fire fell to earth. A great oak on the margin of the forest crashed and lurched forward, its huge branches splashing in the sea. The spray, as it fell, leaped up and wetted the pinnace, a few cold drops sprinkling the face of Ananias Dare. With a groan the assistant sank down, cowering, to the deck. Again and again the lightning flashed on every side, jaggedly tearing the sky as though against its weave. Yet, as the sea had not responded with a burst of wrath, but only writhed slowly, as if in pain too great for utterance, the barges forged ahead with steady progress toward their goal.

Fortunately, there was but little wind. Merely a summer thunder-storm had broken over them, the like of which they had never seen in England.

The rowers persisted stubbornly in their cumbrous crafts, while Dyonis gripped the pinnace's helm with phlegmatic pertinacity and looked only toward Croatan. Near Dyonis, in the stern, sat Eleanor, her protecting arm and cloak around Virginia, who, curiously enough, peered out at the storm with not a trace of childish fear. Vytal, Marlowe, and Manteo still stood in the bow, the former now and again calling orders to their steersman, while Ananias, crouching, looked landward over the gunwale. Still the long line of boats pushed on like a school of whales, Hugh Rouse and Prat bringing up the rear with a barge-load of ordnance.

"There it goes, there it goes again," said Roger, rowing for dear life. "'Tis worse than a Spanish bombardment. I' faith, midget, I am tempted to shoot back. What say you?" and his heavy panting drowned the sound of a low chuckle.

"Madman, row!" roared Hugh, "row, an you want not a watery grave this minute!"

"Watery?" said Prat. "Damnable fiery, I call it. Our well-merited brimstone boils early." He broke off, puffing, and looked over his shoulder down into the bow with much difficulty, owing to the shortness of his neck. "O your Majesty, 'tis an unfortunate hap, yet I pray you, sire, rest easy." The bear, crouching in the bow, poked his snout forward under Roger's arm. "*He* is not forever setting me to work," muttered Prat.

"Nay, nor me on edge by fleering raillery."

"On edge!" cried Roger. "'Tis timely spoke. On edge, eh? Body o' me! look sharp, manikin! 'Tis the barge we set on edge; see there!"

His warning came just in time, for, owing to the sudden shifting of the bear, a small stream of water poured in over the gunwale. Rouse and Prat moved quickly to the other side, and the barge righted itself. King Lud rolled over, growling angrily.

Then, as if to drown his voice, the thunder itself growled in a final fit of rage and retreated, with low mutterings, toward the setting sun. At last a ray of light shone faintly through a rift in the cloud and a long shaft of gold glanced obliquely to the earth, beside which the now distant gleam of forked and unsymmetric lightning seemed like a sign of chaos fading before the advance of order. The rain, which for a few moments had fallen in torrents, passed on, while only a shower of sunshot drops, falling like diadems from the woodland's crown, echoed the harsh patter of a moment before.

"It is over," said Marlowe, and, turning, he looked long at Eleanor, then went down into the stern and spoke to her. A momentary flash like the lightning shone in his eyes. "Thus would my love," he declared, "consume its object."

She returned his glance meditatively. "Nay, that is not love."

"'Twould, indeed, be mine." He gazed off to the western sky in deep abstraction, adding slowly: "Yet, 'tis not love I see before me; it is death. Alas! I like not the stealth of death as it creeps seemingly nearer and very near." He paused, still looking away toward the sun, which in another moment sank behind the forest of the mainland. And Eleanor made no answer, but instinctively turned to glance at Gyll Croyden in the boat behind them. Then, realizing that Marlowe was following her gaze, she looked up at him again quickly. The spirit of premonition had suddenly left his eyes; the moment

of transcendency had passed. He was smiling at Mistress Croyden.

But the little Virginia, peering up at Christopher from under her mother's cloak, whispered, "Death," and again, with a bright smile, slowly, questioningly, "Death?" as though striving to grasp the meaning of a new and pretty word.

The treble voice, however, was suddenly drowned by a loud cheer from many throats, the sound of which caused Virginia to look about like a white rabbit from its hole and to pout at the rude interruption of her childish reverie. But soon she darted out from the cloak and added her prattle to the prolonged huzzah, for her bright eyes told her that once more she could run about in chase of birds and quest of flowers.

The colonists had arrived at Croatan.

CHAPTER XIX

"Hark to a motion of eternal league."
—MARLOWE, in *Dido, Queen of Carthage.*

IN a week the English settlement had assumed an aspect that hinted at permanent residence on the island of Croatan. The Indian town, with a population of over one hundred, still offered shelter to the newcomers, though a number of houses, after the white man's fashion of building, were already nearing completion. The village, girdled by trees, occupied a wide and natural opening. The sites of houses had been chosen with a certain regularity and crude symmetry as to position, which gave the paths an almost street-like appearance. The dwellings themselves were varied according to the tastes of their builders and the advantages of their surroundings, some walled by strips of bark staked to the ground and fastened together by thongs of hide; others, more pretentious, being strengthened by numerous upright poles placed side by side in double lines and bent over at the top, where they formed arched and lofty roofs. The interior of the house which belonged to Manteo and his mother was surprisingly spacious, measuring almost twenty yards in length, and in width as many feet.

One summer morning a child stood wonderingly before the threshold of this dwelling, regarding in silence another child in the doorway. The first was Virginia, the second Manteo's son, a dark, supple

boy, whose unclad body shone like bronze in the sunlight. Between the two, momentarily, there was silence, each regarding the other with curious and bashful eyes; until at last Virginia, stepping eagerly forward to the Indian lad, held out her hand. For a minute he looked down at the delicate fingers and little palm with a bewildered expression, as though at an object clearly demanding his attention, but in no way understood. Not a smile crossed his dark face; the perplexity was very sober, and the belief that she desired some gift embarrassed him, for what had he to give? But suddenly, as if with an intuitive impulse, he offered that which alone seemed available—his hand. At this she laughed, and, turning her head, now this way, now that, inspected the dusky present like a young bird and held it fast.

"The White Doe," said Manteo, who stood near by with Vytal, "shall be as a bond between our peoples."

CHAPTER XX

"... Adieu!
Since destiny doth call me from thy shore."
—MARLOWE, in *Dido, Queen of Carthage.*

AT Croatan the springs ran freely, and the soil, being naturally irrigated, bore sufficient crops for all. This the English sowers learned gladly, after inspecting the work of their uncivilized brethren with admiration for the bountiful result, if not for the crude and irksome methods of cultivation. Here men, women, and children were alike tillers of the soil, and although, with needless exertion, sticks were used instead of ploughs and holes dug instead of furrows, the wide fields beyond the town's encircling strip of woodland showed an abundance of maize, or guinea wheat; beans, pease, and tobacco. About a third of the forest was composed of walnut-trees, from which the nuts were plucked by the natives, to be used as seasoning in spoon-meat. Chestnuts, which strewed the ground, were also gathered and made into a kind of bread.

The recent rains appeared to have reawakened nature; for not only had all the crops of fruit and vegetables been revivified, but animal life as well. Wild geese and turkeys, immense flocks of water-fowl and penguins, swans, crows, and magpies, being affrighted now and then by some unaccustomed sound, as a trumpet-call or accidental musket-shot, would rise with a concerted flutter and whir like a

great wind above the forest. At these moments the varied clamor of their cries would fill the air with an alarum so loud as to seem almost human in tone and power.

Beasts of the field, great and small, were also near neighbors of the tribesmen. Black bear, deer, rabbits, opossums, wild hog, and foxes abounded on every side. Thus all manner of palatable meat was to be had for a single day's hunting.

In life and custom the English soon became half Indian, the Indians half English.

Yet, with all the outward sign of harmony, and despite the genuine friendliness, a hope, deep down in the English hearts, strove to believe that this condition was in no way final. The barrier of race was too strong so soon to be removed. The Indians were on their own soil, surrounded by their intimate kinsmen, and living much as they had always lived; but the English were in exile. Thoughts of England haunting them at moments brought restless longings. That which had been born and bred in the bone must die with it. As the grave is the only portal to a life divine, so Death is the sole power by which a new country is forced to yield itself in full before the influx of aliens. The earthly land of promise is for sons, not fathers. With the first generation it is a trust, and only with the second a possession.

Many of the colonists, despite their new-found comfort and prosperity, were yet unsatisfied. Their hearts yearned for England. Gradually they went from bad to worse. Their turbulence, vice, and incontinence ran riot as never before. Only a few labored steadily for the common good. On these the others lived as parasites. Yet the minority averted the colony's dissolution. Eleanor Dare, for one, by a daily example of fortitude, a never-failing sympa-

thy, a detailed attention to the little ills and troubles of her fellows, served, through her influence upon the women, to maintain the industry of the men. While, however, it was she who thus gradually turned sorrowful resignation to contentment, it was Vytal who, by personal and continual contact with the planters, dominated their wills and held them fast to duty.

The control of these two superior spirits, one feminine, the other masculine, and each the other's need, formed an almost perfect diarchy, by which the colonists of Virginia were governed for many years.

The influence of a third dominant spirit is more difficult to define, being that of Christopher Marlowe, whose temperament, ever varying and mystical, was understood by few.

As months passed the poet became again enveloped in abstraction, until at last his mind seemed to be concentrated on some definite purpose, of which the existence was made evident by an unusual taciturnity and set expression, while the purpose itself remained a mystery.

It had become the custom of Marlowe to absent himself daily from the town, and to pursue his solitary way, morning after morning, to a northeastern promontory that stretched out into the sea from an adjacent island. On these walks he was always, by apparent intention, alone. Standing on the shore, with face turned northward and eyes intent on scanning the wide horizon, his graceful figure was ever solitary, his reflections ever with no response save from his inward self. Thus for months, without the exception of a single day, he went to the promontory, until his patience was rewarded by the sight of that which he had so long awaited. An instinct, a premonition, an inward certainty, call it what he would, had told him that his determination must find

an opportunity at last. Therefore, when the chance to work his will finally offered itself, he regarded it with small surprise. He called himself, not without a certain vain though mournful loftiness, the agent of Destiny; hence, when Destiny came to claim self-sacrifice at his hands, he met it with familiar greeting.

Starting out to welcome that which he termed "Incarnate Fate," he made his way farther north, and having finally, as he told himself, "bound the Parcæ with their own thread," returned to Croatan.

It was all a mystical thrall, dominant and positive, yet vaguely transcendental, as it is here described. The actual was resolved instantly to the poetical in his mind, and in this, the beginning of the final act of his life's drama, he became that astral dreamer and etherealist whom a few, by the perceptive comprehension of his poetry, have recognized and understood.

On re-entering the town, Marlowe sought Eleanor Dare. She was sitting near the threshold of her door with Virginia, who, slight, pale, and more visionary than real, watched him with a curious eagerness and joy as he approached; for Christopher and the Indian youth were, with the exception of her mother, the sole favorites of her child heart. To her father Virginia showed a peculiar devotion, but this was often broken by moments of angry rebellion, while usually with Eleanor, and always with Manteo's son, she seemed perfectly in accord.

"Mistress Dare, I would speak to you now beyond the town, where no interruption can break in upon my sorrow."

Before Eleanor could reply, the child, looking up into Marlowe's face, asked, half wistfully, "What is sorrow?"

The poet gazed down at her and smoothed her hair. "That is a secret," he answered, kindly.

"Whose secret?" she demanded, pouting. "My mother's?"

"Yes."

"And yours?"

"Yes."

"And my father's?"

"Yes, perhaps."

"And Captain Vytal's?"

The poet inclined his head. "Ay, truly, his as well."

"And is it the dark boy's?"

"Nay, not yet."

"Ah, then I am glad," said Virginia, with a satisfied air, "for it would not be nice if he, too, had a secret that I did not know. But please tell me the secret about sorrow, Master Christopher." She tripped over the long name, pronouncing it with difficulty.

The poet smiled. "Sorrow is the secret of happiness, little White Doe; and some day, when you have lived perhaps a million years up near the sun and are entirely happy, you will say, 'Tis all because I guessed the secret far down there.'"

She looked up at him, her eyes sparkling with pleasure. "Tell me now," she pleaded; but seeing that he had already forgotten, she turned and, with a pout, ran off to seek her dusky playfellow. "Dark boy," she said, on finding him near by, "I am glad you do not know the secrets I don't know."

For a moment Eleanor watched her as here and there in the distance she flitted about the bronze figure.

"I can in no way comprehend her, Master Marlowe."

"Nay, nor shall the day come in all the earthly future when she shall understand herself. Thus are some of us prescient with meaning, yet forever enigmatical, save to—save to—shall I say God?"

"Yes, to God," replied Eleanor, simply; and, rising, she walked with Marlowe into the fields beyond the town.

For several minutes they went on in silence, she in wonder waiting to hear what he would say, he melancholy and wrapped in meditation. At last they came to the edge of a wide wheat-field, over which the surface of the sunlit grain swayed and rippled like a lake of pale and molten gold. As the poet looked across it he smiled sadly, yet with a certain light recklessness of manner that belied the former seriousness of his look. "See," he said, "the wheat inclines eastward; the wind is from the west. I'd have thee remember, Mistress Dare, that if in the near future I am no more to be seen, there is no deeper reason in't than in this course the wind doth follow. To America I came, for the wind blew hither from the east. The wind is changed, madam, and so my way. 'Tis Fate ordains this brief farewell."

At these words Eleanor started perceptibly, her eyes opening wide in amazement. "Farewell!" she exclaimed. "O sir, what mean you by 'farewell'?"

He took her hand and, bending low, kissed it reverently. "I cannot say, for, alas! many know the present meaning, but none the hidden prophecy, of that word 'farewell.'"

"Yet surely, Master Marlowe, you contemplate no—"

"Nay," he rejoined, with a vague smile; "I shackle the Fates with their own thread for but a single day, and not forever." Turning, he walked away on the margin of the wheat-field that now, no longer golden,

swayed and whispered beneath an umbrous pall; and Eleanor, seeming to be bound by the spell of his mysticism, could only watch in silence his graceful, receding figure while the tall wheat-blades bent forward and touched him as he passed. When at last he was about to disappear, she would have started after him, but at this instant Virginia, flitting as though from nowhere to her mother's side, called out to him, "Come back!" He turned. "Please, Master Kyt, come back and tell me the secret."

But Marlowe only shook his head, and, waving his hand, went forward with light footsteps into the woods.

CHAPTER XXI

"It lies not in our power to love or hate,
For will in us is overrul'd by fate."
—MARLOWE, in *Hero and Leander.*

AS the poet made his way through the forest he came suddenly on a scene that caused him to pause, laugh, quicken his pace, and turn aside to another trail, by which he reached the shore. Here, shrugging his shoulders, he sat down on the sand, looking back now and then as if waiting to be joined by some one who occupied his thoughts. Whether or not this person would come he could not be sure, since the scene just witnessed had disclosed a new phase of the situation in which he had placed himself.

In the clearing which he had just passed sat Gyll Croyden looking up at Roger Prat, who stood before her in an attitude of indecision and unaccustomed solemnity, while the bear regarded them drowsily from the overhanging branches of a tree. What transpired between the man and woman Marlowe could not definitely surmise, yet the result of their conversation was to subvert completely his own future.

"Now, I tell you," said Prat, after the sound of footsteps had died away, "I am a peculiar personage." He sank his chin deep into its triple substructure and surveyed her with perplexity. In his hand he held an Indian pipe, whose wreaths of smoke rose and cast a veil before his face, through which

his troubled, protruding eyes looked out with ghostly light.

"A peculiar hobgoblin," corrected Gyll, laughing more from nervousness than mirth—"a dear hobgoblin."

He eyed her reproachfully. "Oh, you may deride me with unflattering names," he said, "but it makes no difference. Mark you, until now there has been one thing only which could make Roger Prat turn on his heel and run for dear life. This was the sight of a petticoat; but, alack! I am changed, most miserably changed, and, by some perversity, my new courage seems cowardice as well. For I take it that a really brave man nerves himself to retreat before the bombardment of a wench's eyes. 'Tis the coward who succumbs."

Gyll pouted. "Run away, then, and prove yourself a soldier." But he shook his head with ponderous gravity, and, curiously enough, the unprecedented soberness of his manner spread to her. "Oh, you would stay. Now, I am glad of that, Sir Goblin," and, rising, she stood facing him, with a hand on each of his bulky shoulders. "I am glad, Roger," she repeated, in a softer tone. "For dost know that, with all my gallants, with the memory of all those faces upturned and kisses thrown to my window on the Bankside, 'tis a common fighting man I would marry?—a great, cumbersome roly-poly, a mountain, a heathen image, call him what you will, yet to me he hath so light a heart, so quaint a way, so sturdy a courage, that methinks he hath already won me."

At this, either a recollection of her long-lost girlhood or a play of mere wanton coquetry—she herself did not know which—caused her to cast down her eyes, while the flush of her cheeks deepened vividly. For an instant Prat seemed to sway, as though his

legs with an effort supported his corpulent body, and the perplexity of his look increased. Instinctively he thrust the pipe-stem between his teeth, and, gazing up at King Lud, blew a cloud of smoke into the branches. The bear looked down through it, blinking and sniffing at his master, while for a moment Roger himself was almost completely enveloped.

"Thou imp of Uppowac," quoth Gyll, stepping back with a grimace, "is this thy only response to my condescension?" and she made as though to start away into the forest. But Roger, suddenly all-forgetful of his dilemma, waddled after her.

"Nay, stay," he called, apprehensively; "stay, and permit me to collect my scattered wits."

She turned and laughed with scornful badinage. "Stay?" she echoed; "and wherefore, pray? Merely that you may blow tobacco fumes into my eyes and blind them to the charm of your countenance?"

"Oh no," he remonstrated. "In troth, I blew the smoke to hide the face of his wondering majesty above. His red eyes and sniffing snout seemed to condemn and scorn me. There, I'll smoke no more," and, knocking out the pipe's ashes, he restored it quickly to his belt.

Seeming to be mollified by this, Gyll sat down again on the grass, while the new softness of her expression returned. "Prithee, Roger, make up your mind on that which troubles it, for if again I start, I go, and there's the end."

He gazed at her for a moment with solemn eyes, and now she smiled in an almost womanly way instead of laughing wantonly. "Tell me, Gyll, dost really—dost truly?—" but he broke off for want of a word.

"Truly what?" she asked, in a low voice.

His chin sank into its underfolds again, and he twirled a pair of globular thumbs tentatively. "Dost truly have that feeling for me which the poet would call 'love'?"

The question touched her sense of the ludicrous keenly, yet his astonishing earnestness underlying it must have reached a deeper sense, for still she only smiled instead of laughing, and answered, "Yes."

At this his rotund face grew brighter. "Come, then, to the Oxford preacher, Gyll, before we change our minds;" and, nothing loath, she rose quietly.

"Change our minds, Roger! I, for one, shall ne'er do that."

"Nay," he said, "nay, I pray you, do not change. Oh, that would be dire misfortune;" whereon, picking up the end of King Lud's chain, which dangled from the tree, he tugged thereat until the beast, with a good-humored growl, descended. For an instant the sight of her animal friend brought the old, careless look to Gyll's face — there was something so drolly suggestive of Roger in the bear's bandy legs and awkward gait. A fit of devil-may-care recklessness seized her. The strain of even a moment's seriousness on such a nature being unendurable, breaks in the end, and, as when a supporting rope is severed without warning the one who has been held thereby falls suddenly, so the snapping of a moral stay leaves one sprawling in abandonment.

Gyll went to the extreme of flippancy. "Come," she said. "Look at King Lud. Let him give us his blessing. Let him tie the knot with his great paws upon our heads. I much mislike real parsons; we will have none o' them. I'll bind myself to no man. 'Please one, please all,' as the song hath it—'please

one, please all.'" So saying, she was on the point of profaning her troth by kneeling, with a laugh, before the bear, when a glance at Prat restrained her. The soldier had started back with an oath. His eyes, enraged as she had never seen them, were lowering, and his breath came quickly. With one hand he ground the bear's chain until its links grated as if they must break in the tight-clinched fist, while with the other he sought his hip, and the fat palm ignored his flute and Uppowac pipe to cool itself on the metal of his sword.

Gyll drew back in amaze. "How now, goblin," she asked, with not a little terror; "art gone wholly mad?"

He said nothing, but slowly his expression altered until a mingling of grief and cold repulsion told her of his inward change. "I would have risked a wedding," he said, at last, and drawing the bear to his side. "I would have made you honest wife, and not ungladly, for I felt a kind o' love—ah, a deal o' love—for you, Gyll; but I'm a peculiar personage, and not irreverent to men o' God and church-like things, be I rake or no. Faith, ye're a most heartless jade, who'll ne'er be wife o' mine. Ye've shown yourself. For that I thank thee;" whereat he turned on his heel and, leading away King Lud, disappeared in the forest.

For a moment Gyll stood listening, and once she called, but only the clank, clank of the bear's chain, growing fainter and more faint in the distance, answered her unhappy cry. Finally, when the sound had died, a flood of tears fell from her eyes, but quickly she brushed them away, then, turning, walked in the direction of the shore, and forced from her tremulous lips a song, popular at the time in Southwark:

"Be merry, friends, and take no thought;
For worldly cares now care ye naught,
For whoso doth, when all is fought,
Shall find that thought availeth not—
Be merry, friends."

Her voice sounded low, its lilt for once seeming artificial. The friends she strove to cheer were her own thoughts—new, discomforting thoughts—yet perhaps more truly friends than all their predecessors. She persisted, however, in drowning the inward mutter of their realization with her voice's melody:

"To take our sorrows mournfully,
Augmenteth but our malady;
But taking sorrows merrily
Maketh them smaller, verily—
Be merry, friends."

And now the notes of a flute came to her from afar, half in accompaniment of her tune:

"Let the world slide, let the world go;
A fig for care and a fig for woe!
If I can't pay, why, I can owe;
And death makes equal the high and low—
Be merry, friends!"[2]

The last words came in faltering tones that utterly belied their meaning, while from the distance the flute's music ended in that wild wail which now, more than ever, denoted a *finale*.

In a few minutes Gyll joined Marlowe on the shore. "Ah, you have come," he said, rising.

She laughed. "So it seems; but wherefore, Kyt, did you so mysteriously arrange this meeting?"

He made an impatient gesture. "Wilt swear to say nothing of my tidings to any in the town?"

"Yea, if it pleases your poetic soul thus to weave mysteries, I make no remonstrance."

He scrutinized her silently until, at last, being satisfied, he spoke again. "I leave for England, Gyll, this very day."

Her eyes opened wide, and she stared at him as at one demented. "Leave for England, Kyt! Thou'rt mad!"

"Nay," he returned, calmly. "Listen. For I know not how many days and months I have scanned the sea far to the northward. For an eternity I have seen naught save gulls and waves, but at last a sail hath come, as I knew it would. Nor is it surprising that I waited expectantly, for while in England I had heard that every year as many as five hundred ships found their way to the great country which Martin Frobisher explored. 'Tis called Newfoundland, and off its banks myriads of fish are caught by the men of Brittany, Normandy, and nearly all the provinces of France. Was it not likely, therefore, that one of these fishing-vessels, returning with its catch, should follow the coast of this continent until it came to southern waters? Well, likely or not, the thing hath happened. A Breton shallop lies to the north and awaits me, for I builded a fire and signalled to it. Three mariners came ashore, and, to one who understood the French language, I explained that I was a castaway. Thus they think me a shipwrecked sailor, and I have allayed their curiosity. Otherwise, no doubt, they would have come prying about Croatan. These men have promised to land me on the coast of France or Ireland." He paused, seeming to question her with a look, but for answer she only threw an arm about his neck.

"Oh, Kyt, art really going? I cannot believe 'tis true."

"Ay, 'tis very truth."

She looked up into his dark eyes with a troubled expression. "Tell me, dreamer, why do you depart so secretly, and why, indeed, at all?"

"Secretly," he answered, with renewed vagueness, "because in secret Destiny works; I for to-day am Fate, and keep these colonists to their duty as Vytal and Mistress Dare have done. Were they to know of the vessel's proximity, they would in a moment be havoc-struck. Ananias would start an insurrection and incite them to seize the shallop. This must not be. I go alone, or with—"

She interrupted him. "Why, why do you go?"

He raised himself to his full height. "Because a voice, calling me in whispers, so decrees. I shall seek audience with the queen and Raleigh to demand the forwarding of supplies and men to Virginia." He paused, a look of despondency crossing his face. "But would I could foresee success. Alas! I cannot. Some godless curse rests on this colony, whose spirit is in the very air we breathe." He looked darkly into the distance, as though the hitherto invisible had come within the range of sight. Then, however, as he heard a sob from the woman beside him, his expression changed. The earnestness of the moment seemed to pall upon him, and he laughed carelessly.

Untying a silken kerchief from her neck, he held it aloft so that it hung lightly on the breeze, its soft ends fluttering toward the sea. "This is the true reason," he said, inconsequently. "The wind blows eastward."

Her eyes were smiling now behind her tears. "May not I go thither also?" she asked, breathlessly. "I cannot stay behind. 'Faith, all the colony hath turned against me. The parson would have me married or banished, were there chance of either fate.

Besides—I'd be more comfortable in Southwark," she added, with a note of hardness in her ever-changing voice.

He pressed her hand pityingly. "As you like, Gyll. 'Tis but natural you desire to return. Neither you nor I were made for this. Our parts were writ to be played in London. I go aboard the shallop within an hour, but it waits too far for you. Tonight we'll anchor to the southward. Do you slip away and await me on the southern shore. Whate'er you do, remember one thing: none must know of our departure. Nay, postpone thy thanks, Gyll, for here comes Vytal by appointment."

She turned, and, on seeing the soldier, who alone of all men inspired her with awe, made her way quickly to the town.

As Vytal joined Marlowe, they spoke at once of that which paramountly filled their minds. "I am ready to start," said Christopher. "The shallop lies north of Hatarask."

"Then," returned Vytal, "let us go to it at once. I will accompany you thither."

They walked along the shore. "We can speedily reach the place," said Marlowe, who was oppressed with the other's silence; "I have left a canoe on the northern beach."

Vytal inclined his head, as who should say, "I supposed so."

The poet's eyes saddened. "Your muteness is hard to brook."

"Nay, Kyt, I count it kind to both of us."

"Wherefore kind?"

"Because, when the heart is sick, words but pain it more."

"You regret, then, my departure?"

"For my own sake, deeply. We have been friends."

"Ay," said the poet, "friends. Friendship's the reality; love but a pleasant dream. I look back over the past five years and think of our conversations. I recall, too, those few hours when I talked with Mistress Dare. The difference is plain. Man and man enjoy the freer reverie. No personal distraction mars their elemental thought. They become unbiased lookers-on at life, unfettered by the stage directions. To them the lover's star hath varied cosmic meanings which far transcend its amorous spell. To them all nature shows her heart, and not the mere reflection of their own. Ay, only with man and man is meditation free — unless — of course, unless — the dream of love hath proven true." The last words came in a voice of pain, which, however, passed as he added, mechanically, "But come, here is the canoe."

Following the poet, Vytal stepped into the craft, and with a single stroke of his paddle sent it far out across the inlet. With long, slow sweeps he propelled it on in silence, while Marlowe, facing him, gazed at the sharp-cut features with a kind of worship in his eyes.

"Hath any yet known you, Vytal? Hath one single man or woman probed your depths?"

Vytal shrugged his shoulders for reply, then said, in a voice that sounded harsh even to himself, "We are come to your starting-point," and, as they landed, "Where is the ship?"

"Five miles to the north."

"Let us hasten, then, by the shore."

They walked for many minutes mutely, until Vytal spoke as though half to himself: "I would have made the sacrifice in your stead, but for these children of Croatan, these helpless colonists, who are in my charge."

The poet's eyes lighted up with their old fervor. "I know it well, for partly I know you." His eyes wandered. "Yet I cannot say that, were I you, I would have left her even for friendship's sake. I read you, I read myself—you as mighty prose, I, it sometimes seems, as vainly garnished poetry. Marlowe would whisper to her, 'My soul sings thine,' but Vytal would say, 'I love thee.' Methinks in these very words lie our inmost selves contrasted." Turning again to look at his companion, he found the dark face averted, but when at last he saw its deep-graven, premature lines again, he found no change in the expression.

"I trust you will make every effort," said Vytal, "to gain audience with the queen."

"Yes, I swear it, but I fear 'twill prove of no avail. White hath not returned, nor shall I, nor shall any man. Tell me, hast not felt that, with all thy power, thou and these people are foredoomed?" But as he received no answer, Marlowe became resigned to the taciturnity of his friend. After all these years he was forced to confess that even now, in what he believed to be the final parting, he could not touch his comrade's depths, or even, touching them, elicit response save the look and intense voice that told him of Vytal's friendship. "Nevertheless, there is but one man," he resumed at length, as though to himself, "who of all merits your fear. I speak of—" He broke off suddenly. "Hark! what was that?"

They stood still, intently listening.

A low "Whist!" reached their ears from the adjacent woods.

"Foh!" exclaimed Christopher. "'Twas but the hissing of a snake."

"Nay," said Vytal, "wait!"

The words were no sooner spoken than the dusky

figure of Manteo emerged from the forest, and the Indian approached them with noiseless step. "My brother, have a care. I waited that I might warn thee. Two men, lying concealed to the northward, curiously watch the ship at anchor. The one is Towaye, the other your countryman who named himself 'Ralph Contempt!'"

CHAPTER XXII

"I, and the Catholic Philip, King of Spain,
Ere I shall want, will cause his Indians
To rip the golden bowels of America."
—MARLOWE, in *The Massacre at Paris.*

"RALPH CONTEMPT!"

The name transformed them instantly. The old perfervid recklessness rekindled fire in Marlowe's eyes, while the lineaments of Vytal's face contracted and grew sharper with rigid hate.

"Let one of us return," suggested the poet, "and bring a force to help capture him. It cannot be that he is alone with Towaye."

Vytal dissented. "We should lose time by going to Croatan, and even the absence of one would jeopard our chances. If we find we need assistance, Manteo can seek it later. It is most probable that, alone or not, Frazer will strive either to board the shallop and sail or to prevent you from doing so."

"How so? He has no knowledge of my intention."

"Be not so sure. The conjectures of Frazer are as good as certainty. Doubtless he has already guessed the meaning of the ship, for it would not lie there idly waiting without reason. Quick! We must meet the two and take them by ourselves. Lead us, Manteo, that we may come upon them unobserved."

Without a word the Indian re-entered the woods, and, coming to a trail that ran parallel with the coast-line, made a sign to the others, bidding them avoid dry brushwood on the pathway that their tread might

be unheard. For some time they followed him, cautiously keeping on a strip of mossy earth which bordered the trail and muffled their footsteps. It was now high noon, and the sun shone in a clear sky. March, just dying into April, had lost its harshness at sight of spring and grown more tender, as a crabbed parent grows tender with the child of his old age. The air, bracing and clear, seemed to fill their lungs with a breath of immortal life, while the sea's untroubled breast, just visible through rifts in the arras of blossoms, bespoke a joy too deep for surface emotion.

Finally, as their guide turned with finger to lips, Vytal and Marlowe halted. Through a low interstice in the foliage a sight met their eyes which, although expected, caused them to draw their weapons instantly, for on the shore stood Towaye, with bow in hand, facing their cover, and beside him Frazer, lying on the beach, idly patting the sand into little moulds, as a child builds toy castles. The beach, sandy and shelving, rose gradually on either side, until, terminating in two high ridges or bulwarks of sand, it fell away again in long, flat sweeps to the north and south. Thus Frazer and Towaye occupied a naturally fortified square, two sides of which were formed by the sand-bank and two by forest and water. To reach them unobserved was therefore impossible, and an open encounter must necessarily ensue. As the odds favored the aggressors by three to two, there appeared to be small hazard in boldly forcing an issue. Unfortunately, however, Manteo was unarmed save for a wooden truncheon, and Vytal carried only his rapier. But Marlowe, ready to defend himself against Breton mutineers or pirates on the high seas, was better provided, his rapier being supplemented by a pistol and poniard. Ordinarily, with these weapons he would have found

no difficulty in placing Towaye *hors de combat,* but the occasion demanded unusual strategy.

"Your dagger to Manteo," whispered Vytal. "Cover Towaye with the firearm. Nay, don't shoot from here. You are too far for accuracy. If possible, merely wound him. We must take the Indian alive and force him to reveal Frazer's motives. Where is the shallop?"

"Farther on beyond the headland."

"Good! Now at them!"

Side by side the three emerged quickly from the woods. A sudden viperish hiss from his ally caused Frazer to turn instantly, and the enemies stood face to face. Swiftly Towaye started to raise his bow, but swifter still Marlowe's pistol sprang to a deadly aim. Yet the poet, fearing to kill, withheld his bullet. In the next instant he would have changed his aim and fired, but the risk of missing his opponent altogether and receiving the arrow in his own breast held him motionless. Thus between these two there was temporarily a deadlock, while both stood transfixedly waiting for the slightest error of movement on the other's part.

Vytal, however, being in the first second unimpeded, rushed toward his adversary with rapier drawn.

"Halt!" The peremptory cry came from Frazer in a sharp note of menace, as, guarding himself with a rapier in one hand, he now raised with the other a small curved horn to his lips. Keeping it poised as though ready at an instant to sound an alarum, he called threateningly: "Two hundred Winginas lie within the forest waiting. A single blast means death to each of you;" then, with a laugh, "I pray you reconsider the expediency of attacking me now."

Vytal stood still, controlling himself by a great

effort. In his place doubtless the poet and many another would have rushed forward with rash impetuosity, but the campaigner's trained hand could even compass that which to a brave soldier in the heat of fight is the most difficult of tactics, namely, the lowering of his sword.

The two men stood at gaze, Vytal fettered by the realization that his own death would in all probability mean the decimation of the whole colony, and Frazer by the rigid Fate before him.

For once the soldier hesitated. Instinct hinted that threats of alarum were empty, but reason demanded caution. The possibility that an overwhelming force lay near at hand in ambush was by no means slight.

Suddenly Vytal uttered a low order to Manteo, who thereupon, step by step, retreated almost imperceptibly toward the woods.

"Halt!" Again the horn touched Frazer's lips. "I forbid you," he said, "to arouse the settlers." But Manteo only looked to Vytal for a sign.

"Remain," said the latter, calmly, and the deadlock was now complete.

"It is strange, Master Frazer," observed the poet, still covering Towaye with his pistol, "that your horn forbears so long. In troth, I begin to doubt its efficacy."

Frazer laughed. "At any instant I am ready to prove it, Sir Poet. 'Troth, 'tis only a feeling of kindness that delays your doom, mingled perhaps with a slight curiosity. Doom, say I? Yea, doom. This colony will perish. Perchance you know not that John White, your governor, hath come to the very shore of Roanoke and departed.* His own men played

*See White's personal account of his failure in *Hakluyt's Voyages.*

mutineers. He could not seek you at Croatan. Ay, on my oath, 'fore God, a ship came and went away. 'Tis common report in England. Roanoke is deserted, say they; Virginia, a savage wilderness."

Glancing at Vytal, whose face had gone livid as death, he laughed derisively. "Therefore I blame you not, Sir Soldier," he added, with feigned contempt, "for planning this secret desertion."

"Desertion!" cried Marlowe. "Fool! Think you John Vytal would desert?" But his outburst was suddenly interrupted by Vytal. "Look to your lock! Have a care, Towaye! an the arrow rises another inch, you fall." Marlowe regained his aim, yet his thoughts returned immediately to Frazer. "Fool," he repeated. "'Tis *I* who—"

"Hush!" said Vytal.

But the warning was too late, and Frazer laughed once more. "Ay, hush now, an you will, for the secret's out. 'Twas for this I mentioned Vytal. It shall now be my duty—I may say my delight—to detain *you*."

With an oath Marlowe started as though he would have rushed upon the man who so daringly taunted and harassed them. But a word from Vytal, more sudden and apprehensive than before, again restrained him.

"Beware!"

Towaye's bowstring was already pulled, and in the next second an arrow grazed Marlowe's cheek. With a cry to Manteo the poet rushed forward. "We have him now! Quick! Bind his arms!"

"Halt!" For the third time Frazer's lips seemed to kiss affectionately the horn. "A move, a shot, and, by God, I blow!"

The poet, impotent with rage, stood still, and Man-

teo once more haughtily obeyed the order. Even Vytal, in whose eyes a dangerous light gleamed cruelly, made no advance. A bold plan was quickly maturing in his mind. To hide it he exclaimed, as though chagrined, "Cursed horn, it defeats us! I can fight against swordsmen, not musicians."

Frazer started, seemingly with a new impulse. "So be it, then. I fear not your little bodkin. Come, we will decide the issue with our blades."

Vytal's plan, however, prohibited a duel. "Nay, there is trickery in the suggestion. Besides, I do not of a choice tilt with stage-jesters."

At this Frazer appeared to become enraged as they had never seen him. "Stage-jester!" he cried, hoarsely. "Dost know, sirrah, who it is you thus address? Who am I?" The question came in a tone of high fury, and, receiving no response, he answered it himself, as if the assertion burst from him against his will. "I am not Frazer, not Ralph Contempt, but Arthur Dudley. Dost hear? Arthur Dudley, the son of Elizabeth and Leicester!" His manner, calming, became supercilious. "Gentlemen, you see before you the heir apparent to the English throne."

"Liar!" It was Marlowe who spoke, and then for a moment there was silence, while Frazer's lip curled scornfully.

"Oh, you doubt me, gentles. Yet I care not." He took on a grandiose air, whether natural or assumed, they could not tell. "I seek not to convince such men as you. There is one even greater than my mother who knows the truth. I speak of the King of Spain!"*

* "The report of an English spy at Madrid to Lord Burleigh certifies that about this period a young man calling himself Arthur Dudley was then resident at the court of Spain, who

He paused, as an actor pauses to heighten the effect of a sensation. But as Vytal only met his glance with a cold stare, he resumed, nonchalantly: "We have tried once to invade England, on whose throne Philip would have placed me, but we failed. Now that was but a first attempt. Mark you, the end is not yet." He stood erect, as if striving to match his height with Vytal's. "Perhaps you wonder why I have come twice to America? On this point I will satisfy your curiosity. It is because we would lop off this much of my beloved mother's dominions and amputate a limb, as it were, while waiting to seize the trunk. If all else fail, I shall at least be the King of Virginia and St. Augustine."

He said no more, but waited interestedly now as a spectator of the play instead of an actor.

Inexorably Vytal stepped forward, bending his well-tempered weapon in both hands like a bow.

Frazer smiled. "Ah, do you seek to break it and vow allegiance?" he inquired, with mock graciousness, "or merely to prove it of Toledo make? In the former case, I create you Knight of the Bodkin; in the latter, believe me, I know well 'tis a supple blade."

"Unluckily," returned Vytal, wholly disregarding his banter, "it is my duty to cross swords with you. Whether or not you have been so bold as purposely to bring it on yourself by this outrage, I cannot tell. Yet this one thing I know: a man's duty and reverence are ever to his liege sovereign. In the name of my queen's honor I am compelled to fight. Save for your scandalous insult I would have taken you alive, but now—to it!"

had given it out that he was the offspring of Queen Elizabeth by the Earl of Leicester."—Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of England*. See also Ellis's *Letters*, Second Series; and Doctor Lingard's translation from the *Records of Simanca*.

"Stay! First, I pray you, bid the poet and Manteo make no further attack on Towaye, and ask them both to remain here. Only on this condition will I throw aside the horn, trusting to your honor for fair play."

Vytal inclined his head. "Manteo, stand by; and you, Kyt, control Towaye with your aim, but shoot not unless he move."

At this Frazer appeared satisfied. "Towaye, wait. I will end the discussion with their leader first; later we can argue with the others." So saying, he let fall his horn to the sand beside him.

"I would to God," muttered Marlowe, "I had killed him that day in the 'Tabard.'"

Frazer caught the tenor of the wish and smiled again. "Sir Poet," he said, rolling back the sleeves of his doublet, "then we discussed the baiting of a bear, and I waxed eloquent for the pastime. Again we are in the same position, you disapproving from mercy to the animal, I enthusiastic of very love for the sport. But now 'tis not a bear I would fain see pestered; 'tis better still—a wolf!" Whereupon, as his arms were now bared to the elbows, he raised his rapier and saluted the soldier with an easy grace. "I wait!"

The weapons crossed, slithered, separated, and crossed again. Then Vytal lunged, and Frazer, falling back apace, parried successfully, even as the point touched his doublet. Next, in feigned alarm, his arm, wavering, left the heart exposed, and Vytal thrust again. But the stroke was answered with lightning speed, and, save for an even swifter parry, the response would have been final.

Now, with extreme caution, weapons apart, now with seemingly rash bursts of daring, the two fenced

for several minutes, the advantage appearing to change with every move.

To Marlowe, even more than to the principals, the moment was desperate. For, being forced to guard Towaye, he could follow the contest only by the sound of the rapiers, which, in rasping voice, told him that Frazer had mastered the art of fence since their fight on London Bridge. With astonishment and apprehension he wondered why the ring and slither were so long continued, for his straining ears could not explain that which a single glance, had he dared to risk it, would have made evident.

Behind Frazer the water shone like a vast burning-glass, while behind Vytal the forest was a soft background of shade. The glare almost blinded Vytal's eyes; the shadows rested Frazer's. And the latter made the most of his advantage. With quick and varied sidelong springs he used the reflected sunlight as a second weapon, more baffling than the first. Nevertheless, with brows contracted and lids lowered, Vytal so screened his eyes when Frazer, with steps aside, brought the glare into play, that he contrived to gain despite the disadvantage.

Gradually his opponent fell back toward the water's edge.

The weapons played faster and more furiously than before, the sound of Frazer's quick-drawn breath mingling itself with the hoarse whisper of steel as the irresistible swordsman impelled him backward inch by inch. Strangely enough, he had never once made a move toward the horn, and now it lay well beyond his reach.

Suddenly at the water's brink Vytal's rapier, darting forward, zigzagged about its foe like a flash of forked lightning, and Frazer fell to one knee. At this Vytal would have thrust it home, but his great

height compelled him to lean so far forward that the water, in which he now stood ankle-deep, cast up its glare directly into his eyes, and for a second he was subject to a retinal blur, while splotches of silver obscured his vision. At this instant Frazer, springing to an erect position, lunged viciously, but the thrust was parried with blind instinct, and Vytal's half-closed eyes saw his adversary fall back, steadily back, before him into the sea.

Now they stood up to their knees in water, Vytal gaining, until even their scabbards were submerged. Again and again the soldier had striven to turn his foe, but never had he met so dexterous and strategic an opposition. Yet there seemed to be no doubt as to the issue, for at the last Frazer, merely endeavoring to control the other's point, was content to recede on the defensive. And soon Vytal foresaw that his opponent, who, besides being many inches shorter than himself, was also farther from the shore, would in a moment be struggling in deep water, since even now he was forced to keep his sword-arm at a high level for free play. Having no desire thus to drown him, Vytal purposely fell back a pace, his innate sense of justice forbidding him to avail himself of the advantage, though he had well earned it, and even though his enemy, in the same position, would have profited thereby with no compunction.

Yet even as he fell back a mocking laugh escaped from Frazer's lips, and Vytal, no longer generously hesitating, thrust with fatal intent. Quicker still, however, Frazer dived beneath the water, and the soldier now looked out across a circle of shining ripples that widened until they passed him and reached the shore. And Frazer, with full-inflated lungs, still remained below the surface.

Impassively Vytal turned, and, regaining the shore, amazed Marlowe by blowing on the horn.

"God's pity! why do you do that?" asked the poet, still holding his pistol on a level with Towaye's heart. "It means our massacre."

"Nay," said the soldier, "he would have tried to regain it were there allies near. His threat was hollow. I seek to arouse the town." He looked at the two men before him as they stood facing each other, the poet threatening, the Indian sullen, and added, mercilessly, "Fire!"

"To kill?"

Vytal turned to Manteo. "He is *your* enemy, my brother."

"To kill," said the chief, "for he is a traitor to the men of his blood."

The poet shuddered. "Do you, then, avenge them," he said, handing the pistol to Manteo, and the lord of Roanoke inclined his head. A pistol-shot rang out. Towaye fell with a groan, mortally wounded.

A face rose to the surface of the water, invisible behind a rock, and a pair of lips opened wide to admit air, then closed tightly and disappeared.

"Now, make haste," said Vytal to Manteo. "Get you over yonder ridge and intercept our enemy if he lands there." Without a word the Indian sprang to the sand-bank, and, clearing it, was lost to view. Vytal turned to Marlowe. "Stay here. He is a fox, and may retrace his course, supposing that we have gone to the right and left in search of him. I guard the northern shore," and instantly Vytal disappeared beyond the second bulwark.

"He is not a fox, but a fish," muttered Marlowe, reloading his pistol. Almost before the words were spoken a head appeared above the surface of the water. The poet raised his weapon and took aim.

"Oh," exclaimed Frazer, unconcernedly, as he waded inshore, "is this thy boasted poetry, to shoot me like a dog?"

Marlowe impatiently drew a rapier, while Frazer came to the beach.

"Once more," he said, "the crown prince must fight with a commoner." Then, feigning to thrust at Christopher, he suddenly swerved, and with his left hand grasped the horn which he and Vytal in turn had let fall near the water.

"This was the signal," he declared, still menacing the poet with a flashing blade. "Not one blast, but three!" And he blew thrice in rapid succession.

Instinctively Marlowe turned toward the forest, expecting to see a horde of savages rush therefrom upon him. But in that instant of error only a single figure crossed his vision, fleet as Mercury, and, to his deep mortification, even before he could change rapier for pistol, he saw Frazer vanish in the woods.

In a fit of wild exasperation the poet started headlong in pursuit; but he had scarcely crossed the beach when Vytal and Manteo, recalled by the horn's flourish, reappeared from beyond the ridges.

"There, in there!" cried Christopher, and would have rushed forward again had not the soldier restrained him.

"How long is it since he escaped you?"

"One minute. You heard the alarum. He fled immediately."

Vytal turned to Manteo. "Will you follow him?"

"Yes."

"Hasten, then," and the chief, with noiseless tread and eyes keenly perceptive of every telltale twig and leaf, made his way into the forest. "He understands the stalking of game," observed Vytal. "It is best so."

Marlowe's face clouded dismally. "Ay, 'tis best so, and 'tis best that I sail away. Twice this fellow hath outwitted me with the simplest trickery. I am not worthy to remain."

"Ah," said Vytal, with an even deeper note of self-conviction, "these things belong not to your calling. We do not require carpentry of vintners, nor a crop of wheat from fighting-men. But to mine they do belong, and, Christopher—" the voice sounded harsh and unreal—"I have now failed at mine own work—failed!"

He prodded the little sand-hills of Frazer's inconsequent building with the point of his rapier. "Failed!" He seemed to be on the threshold of new knowledge. A word hitherto utterly unknown and unregarded was being cut deep into the granite of his character.

The poet watched him, and saw the keen, unfathomable eyes for once cast down in self-reproach.

"Failed!" The soldier straightened himself and looked about at the shore and water as at a new world.

Now, suddenly, his eyes, flashing the old fire of their indomitable resolve, met Marlowe's. "Failed, but in the end I shall succeed."

A short sigh of relief escaped the poet's lips; not that he had doubted, but that he had awaited, seemingly an age, this reassertion of power. "Yes," he said, "yours was not really failure. Can Fate be thwarted? Nay; yet for a time little men, elated and audacious in their puny grandeur, may break its august decrees and laugh at the inevitable. Vytal, read yourself; interpret the cryptograms your sword hath hewn; translate your nature into words, and, even though you withhold the meaning from us all, you will have attained to the consummative pinnacle

of manhood." The poet's fervid eyes, gazing at his friend, became orators.

For a moment Vytal's face softened, while a fleeting smile crossed it sadly. "I must return now to the town."

"And I," said Kyt, "to my birthland. You have been a 'queen's defender.' This much of the gypsy's prophecy has been fulfilled. I will tell her Majesty, and, in gratitude, I doubt not, she will send hither assistance to you all. Yet, Vytal, my soul is consumed with fear for you and Mistress Dare."

Vytal shrugged his shoulders. "I have not yet worthily defended her, but the day will come."

"Yes," returned the poet, "of a certainty the day will come. Ne'ertheless, have a care, I pray you, when again you meet this Frazer. His strategy is unsurpassed, his cunning resourceful and never spent. I could feel happy even now, in leaving, were the actor dead and his incongruous blue eyes closed, his lips uncurled. Well, I tarry no longer. The moment hath come for me to go. I pray you say nothing of my departure. Let them think that I have been slain by some wild beast, or if, by ill-luck, they see the sail, let them believe I have deserted."

Vytal shook his head. "That I will not. When you are gone I shall tell them of your sacrifice. They must know the truth. A surreptitious leaving and elopement shall not be their charge against you."

The poet's face grew troubled. "But they will blame you," he objected; "they will kill you for your share in the concealment of my plan."

"Let them try," returned Vytal. "I care not; now, farewell."

"Farewell." The two separated abruptly, and Marlowe, with a light step, artificially careless, made

his way to the headland beyond which lay the Breton shallop awaiting him.

In the evening, under cover of darkness, a canoe, propelled by one man, came stealthily to the southern shore of Croatan, and went away again with two occupants. Later these two boarded a vessel that hovered about near the mainland. The ship, the canoe, the people were shadows—all wraiths of unreality. But suddenly, after the vessel had crept away, far to the eastward, and the land was seen no more, a low, weird song arose at the first moment of light. It was from many voices, sailorly and strong, but the tongue and the tune were strange save to the stalwart singers.

"Ann eoriou zo savet; setu ar flik-ha-flok!
Krenvat ra ann avel; mont a reomp kaer a-rog;
Stegna reeur ar gweliou; ann douar a bella;
Va c'halon, siouaz d'in; ne ra med huanada . . ."

("The anchors are up; hark to the *flik-flok!*
The wind freshens; we speed on our course;
The sails blow full; the land recedes;
Alas! my heart voices only sighs . . .")

Handsome, dark faces, prescient with some mystery of the sea, were revealed slowly as the gray light spread. Umbrous eyes, that seemed sleeping, though unclosed, and whose looks were dreams begetting dreams, gazed out to the eastern line. For the sun had not yet risen.

"Ann eoriou zo savet; setu ar flik-ha-flok!
Krenvat ra ann avel; mont a reomp kaer a-rog . . .

Then, as the sound of the men's deep voices died away across the sea, a woman's voice rose higher, in limpid, silvery tones, yet with words that seemed incongruous in the still gray hour of dawn. For the sun had not yet risen.

"Let the world slide, let the world go;
A fig for care and a fig for woe;
If I can't pay, why, I can owe,
And death makes equal the high and low—
Be merry, friends!"

But the truest singer of them all lay in the bow, shrouded by the daybreak mist, and silent in the depths of slumber.

For the sun had not yet risen.

Thus Christopher Marlowe—an impression, a song, a vivid but fleeting picture—passed from the life of a new-world people.

CHAPTER XXIII

"But who comes here?
How now?"
—MARLOWE, in *The Jew of Malta.*

"MASTER CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE hath disappeared." The assertion came from Ananias Dare, who at noon joined a number of his fellows idling in the town.

"Ay," said a gossip following him, "and Gyll Croyden is nowhere to be found."

"Marlowe gone!" exclaimed one.

"Gyll Croyden missing!" ejaculated another.

"The poet and his love," insinuated the gossip. The women exchanged glances; the men were grave with apprehension.

"By St. George, 'tis a strange hap," said a soldier.

"Some ill hath overtaken them as retribution," declared the Oxford preacher.

"Let us institute a search," suggested several simultaneously. "We may find them."

"Nay, they've not been seen for many hours."

"But we should try."

"Well, then, 'twill keep us fro' twiddling our thumbs. Ho, Prat! Give us aid. 'Ods precious! Where's the merry-andrew gone? Was she not *his* light o' love as well?"

"Yes," laughed the gossip, "but saw you not Prat's look when I told you she had disappeared? He and his bear have gone a-roaming in the forest. Poor clown!"

Many shook their heads with indulgent pity. "Come, let us go in search."

But Ananias Dare, who, being in the turmoil of a struggle against himself, had said little, now stayed them. "They are not in jeopardy. We ourselves have more to fear. Last night I saw a ship bear away to the east. My masters, I doubt not they have clandestinely deserted us. They have gone."

"Deserted us!" The exclamation was not from one only, but all, and an angry muttering ran through the company.

"These poets have no courage."

"She was afraid to stay. The parson bade her marry."

"We are well rid of them."

"Ay, but 'tis an outrage."

Then a new-comer spoke in sharp, condemnatory tones, not against the subjects of their talk, but against their own contumely. It was Vytal. "Yes, Christopher Marlowe hath gone," he said, "for your sake, not his own. A Breton shallop came from the north, and he, for a cause beyond your ken, hath taken passage therein. In England, he will gain audience with the queen, and persuade her Majesty to send us aid. The thing is done. Now make the best of it."

Ananias started forward. "And you knew he was going?"

"I knew it."

"Yet you dared to withhold the knowledge from us?"

Vytal's lip curled. "'Twas no great daring, but only kindness. I held you to your trust, and so shall till death." They started toward him, wrathful, riotous. "Oh, you seek to end the matter now? I am at your service. Here, Hugh, to my side!" The

giant, hurling aside all who sought to oppose him, obeyed, with broadsword drawn.

Ananias fell back from the front ranks swearing, his retreat seeming to affect the others with a like discretion.

"I have fought for you and by your side," said Vytal, a new note of grief in his voice; "yet with death you would repay me."

"Ay, he fought for us well," cried Rouse, fervently, and the words were echoed in embarrassed whispers through the crowd.

Slowly they turned and left him.

For several hours a stout vagabond wandered aimlessly through the woods, now and then addressing an unresponsive companion. "She's gone; my laughing Gyll is gone! Come, your Majesty, get you into the barge; we'll go to Roanoke." The heavy craft, bulky and awkward as its occupants, moved on and on through the night until at last it touched the southern shore of Roanoke. "Behold that glade, your Majesty; it is the very spot where you danced with her while I piped, and the Indians looked on with wonder. But, body o' me! those days are gone. King Lud, thou'lt dance no more." And the vagabond clasped arms with his comrade. "Those days are dead; let 'em be forgot."

Thus together, hither and thither, round and about, the strange pair wandered, until they came to a ravine margined with a natural arbor of grapes whose tangled vines clambered to the trees and lay like sleeping snakes in a near-by opening. To these the bear paid no attention, but sniffed about the trunks of trees for fruit of another kind. One of the arbors, however, interested the soldier.

"It was here," he said, "that her wit right bravely

saved her from Towaye, and she clipped the locks o' her sunny head a-weeping. Lack-a-day, those times are mine no longer. Let 'em be bygones, Roger Prat, and think no more on 't, I do beseech you."

Suddenly he paused and leaned forward. A long rope shone lustrous amid the tendrils of the arbor. "Body o' me! 'tis the very strand!" and, extricating it, he looked about to make sure that even the bear had not discovered his secret. Then, as King Lud disappeared in the woods, he sat down for a moment on the ground, and, gently laying the shining curls across his knees, stroked them again and again, murmuring inaudibly as they moved restlessly in the breeze or caught in his clumsy fingers, while, with a bewildered expression, he rolled his eyes. At last he thrust the golden braid into the bosom of his doublet, and for once the new mournfulness of his round, red face was not absurd. But presently he frowned and rose jerkily to his feet. "Yes, that pygmy Rouse is right," he muttered. "Ye're daft, Roger Prat—daft, indeed."

Thereafter, calling to the bear, he spent the day in returning laboriously to Croatan, on whose shore the animal, sufficiently tamed to rove at large, left him, and, still with an unsatisfied appetite, loped off into the forest.

In the evening Eleanor Dare sat in her dining-room with Vytal. "Then he has actually gone?"

"Yes, on a Breton shallop. He waited for months, hoping that the chance would come at last."

"But he never told me," said Eleanor.

"Nay, for perhaps the power was not in him."

She looked deeply thoughtful. "Oh, I comprehend it all now, but then I considered the farewell one of his vagaries. I thought he was bidding good-

bye to me only—you understand—yet now his words come back to me with double force. Captain Vytal, we have lost a friend."

"Yes," said the soldier, "in truth a friend. It is my duty, however, to tell you that we have regained an enemy;" with which he told her briefly of their meeting with Frazer, of the latter's pretensions, trickery, and escape. At mention of the duel's climax, he coldly chid himself without forbearance as he would have censured any other in his place. "There will be a second attempted invasion," he said, "to repel which we must harbor all our strength. In some unaccountable way this fellow hath escaped Manteo, who but just now has returned, after a futile search. Moreover, Mistress Dare—" But he paused abruptly. He would say no more. From her and from all he must withhold for always the conviction that, by some terrible mischance, John White had come to Roanoke again and gone.

For a moment her eyes questioned him, but, finding no answer, she forbore to voice the query, and quickly dismissed the subject as he willed. Her eyes flashed. "We must, at all cost, defeat them, and assert our rights so strongly as to preclude the possibility of repeated threats."

"We shall."

"Oh, captain, I pray you give me work to do in our defence. Idleness palls upon me in times like these. Give me opportunity, if needs be, to suffer for the common good."

He looked deep into her eyes. "You are one of the few," he said, slowly, "who are worthy to suffer, and, therefore, 'tis for you I fear."

To this she would have replied in all the bravery of her hopeful womanhood, but suddenly her expression changed. "Who is that?" she whispered,

gazing at a near-by window; and then, as a head was thrust in at a casement, she laughed with evident relief, for the long nose of King Lud, who stood without on his hind-legs, was sniffing the air of the dining-hall.

In another second the animal had dropped to his natural posture, and was for shambling off to Roger's cabin, but Vytal's quick eyes had caught sight of a whitish object suspended from the animal's neck. Uttering a short call by which Prat was wont to summon his pet, Vytal opened the door, and saw King Lud irresolutely awaiting him. With a warning gesture to Eleanor, bidding her remain in the house, he went out and stroked the bear's head; then, bending down, untied a thong of deerskin and took from under the shaggy throat the object he had noticed. Returning, he held it in the light, while his brow, contracting, darkened. "It is the very horn," he said, "of Frazer's using. But there is more, too," and he drew a crumpled scrap of paper from the muzzle of the instrument. Spreading it out on the table, he read the first words, whose letters, all small capitals, were formed by innumerable perforated dots pricked through the paper evidently by the sharp point of a weapon.

"To Mistress Dare—"

Vytal looked up at Eleanor. "It is probably unfit for your perusal; therefore, with your permission, I will read it first myself," and, as she inclined her head, he did so.

"To Mistress Dare,—This promise writ with my poniard: I will return anon, my love. The king lives, waiting for his royal consort. It may be a day, it may be a year, or several years, but in the end, I swear to you, that I will come and claim mine own. Yet, if at any time our friend, Captain Vytal, seeks

to capitulate and surrender the colony to my liege sovereignty, let him blow thrice upon this horn—which he will remember is an effective signal in time of need. Written, or rather perforated, in some haste, but no flurry, very near you at Croatan, by the Crown Prince of England, yet your humble slave,

"ARTHUR DUDLEY."

Vytal tore the paper into shreds. "Once more," he said, "this mountebank hath grossly insulted my queen." Eleanor's cheeks flushed vividly.

By a supreme effort he withdrew his eyes from the crimson token of her love and stared fixedly through the casement into the outer darkness of night. "*Our* queen," he added, in a low, metallic voice, "Elizabeth."

Book III

CHAPTER I

"The restless course
That Time doth run with calm and silent foot."
—MARLOWE, in *Doctor Faustus.*

ON the shore of Roanoke, under the eastern cliff, a young Indian stood alone, listening. Tall and straight as a spear, his dark form, undraped, save at the loins, suggested, in the moment of immobility, a bronze statue, fresh from a master-hand. The attentive poise, the keen, expectant eyes, the head thrown back, implied in every muscle and outline a mystery, for the whisper of whose voice he waited breathless. But, as the desired sound was not forthcoming, the spell broke suddenly. He moved, and the all-unconscious pose was lost in activity. With light steps that seemed to fall upon an ethereal roadway, even less solid than the shifting sands, he went to a copse of trees beneath the cliff and, bending forward, scanned the long vines and grasses that ran wild beneath his feet. Through the canopy of green above him a host of sun-rays made their way, and, separating into a myriad golden motes, played in and out amid the maze of cedar-roots that met his eyes. A breeze, laden with the fragrance of numberless shrubs and vagrant flowers, stirred the straight black strands of his hair, to which the sun lent a lustrous gloss like the sheen of a raven's wing. Was it only the air, fresh and warm with midsummer balm, that filled him to the flood with ardent life? Was it merely the

sun that kindled those lights in his eyes, and only the free flux of animal spirits that possessed him? The eagerness of his quest gave answer, and even the song-birds, now in silence watching him from high above, seemed to divine that here was no intruding fowler, no mere hawk more powerful than themselves.

Again he paused, listening, and now the intent look changed to an expression of apprehension and dismay. The statue of Hope was transformed to a figure of Alarm; the pleasure of seeking to the disquietude of a search in vain.

Suddenly, however, from the branch of an oak-tree, in the heart of whose shadow he stood, a voice came down to him, blithe, merry, triumphant, and the voice, for all its melody, was not a bird's. "Dark Eye, the White Doe is here." He looked up, smiling, and somewhat mortified, but not long, for in a minute the maid, who had outwitted him in their game of hide-and-seek, stood on the ground, her laughing eyes and words bantering him without mercy. "Oh, what availeth the speed and craft of Dark Eye when the White Doe hides?"

"Virginia," he said, pronouncing the name with difficulty, "thou art no white doe, but a spirit of the woods."

As a description of her appearance his observation was not amiss. The little Virginia Dare, a child no longer, seemed rather a spirit than a maid. Yet in the gentle curves of her form and the expressive depth of her hazel eyes there was already a promise of maturity. They were a pair of rovers, these two, without guile, without one marring trace of worldly comprehension, without that indefinable, but ever-apparent, disingenuousness of face and voice that comes when the fruit of knowledge has been tasted;

they were deer, revelling in their forest freedom, and sea-gulls, loving the water. Sylvanites, barbarians, brother and sister, going and coming as they willed, they were always together, and, as yet, in no way conscious of themselves.

And the guardian angel was Eleanor. To her the freedom of their companionship was a source of constant joy. Had she not done well to leave their Eden unbounded by convention? Could she not thus in a measure regain what she herself had lost, and allow Virginia the happiness which had been withheld from her? "Yes," she answered, in one of her reveries, "it is well." And from the day of that first decision, Virginia, always clad in white draperies, loose and clinging, went barefoot, hatless, and unrestrained. The years of restriction were yet in the future.

Indeed, as the two now stood together on the shore —primordial beings, all unblemished by a past— that future, though approaching, seemed far away.

"Come," said Virginia, after she had taunted him sufficiently to please her whim, "you so nearly found me that I will grant reward for the tedious quest."

She went to the base of the cliff, while he, enchanted by her every motion, and striving to guess the nature of the guerdon, followed her in silent wonder. Near the cliff she paused and took a shell, pink, shallow, and translucent, from an old wampum-pouch that, in their childhood, he had given her. Next, she plucked from a vine that rambled down the cliff-side a cluster of grapes, green as their own leaves, and almost bursting. "There," she said, casting them on a strip of mossy ground; "now wait," with which she trod upon the cluster with her bare feet; then, as their luscious juice ran freely, held them aloft, and the shell beneath, so that into

it the sparkling drops fell one by one until they overflowed the brim.

And now, after touching the nepenthe to her lips, she held out the delicate chalice to him and bade him drink.

As though participating in some magic that would presently enchant them both, he tasted, and would have emptied the shell delightedly, but on a sudden he started and, letting fall the fairy cup, pointed to the sea. With a cry of astonishment, Virginia and her comrade ran to a winding path which led to a higher vantage-point, and in a moment they stood upon a headland, side by side, he transfixed, she trembling with excitement.

"'Tis a ship," she said, breathlessly. "I can just remember the white wings. In one of these ships my grandfather sailed away, and they say that I saw him go. In another went Master Kyt, but I saw not the wings that bore him from us. I wonder if Master Kyt is returning? How many years have passed since he departed?" She held up her hand and counted them on her tapering fingers. "'Tis five—"

But for once the Indian was not heeding her. "Look," he said, "there is not one ship only."

Turning again to face the sea, she saw two distinct white clouds, one in the middle distance, one just surmounting the horizon.

"Come," suggested Virginia, "let us give the signal to our people who fish in the sound." So saying, she led him along the palisade until they reached Vytal's deserted hut, near which the old culverin still remained on guard and ready-primed. "This is the way," she commanded—"Captain Vytal showed me," and, when he had obeyed her instructions, a deafening roar went seaward from the land. "Oh, 'tis a

terrible sound," cried Virginia, covering her ears with her hands; "but that is enough, and now let us go down to meet the townsmen as they land and tell them the tidings before they spy those wings themselves." As she started away, first one, then another musket-shot, each fainter than the last, answered her signal from the south. With a long succession of alarums, the fishermen repeated the first startling report back and back even to Croatan.

By the time Virginia and the Indian reached the northern shore several barges were already within sight.

Vytal, leading in a canoe, was the first to land.

"Two ships are coming!" cried Virginia. "Where is my mother?" But the soldier strode past her, making no reply, his eyes ablaze with a light that long ago had left them as though forever.

Hugh Rouse, stepping ashore from the next canoe, leaned forward from his great height and seized Virginia by the arm as though to crush her with a single grasp. "What were those words of thine?" he demanded, with unprecedented ferocity. "Speak them again!"

"A ship is coming," she said, half fearfully; "nay, two." But the last words were unheard, and the giant, turning to face the many approaching barges, roared out, "A sail!"

"A sail! A sail! A sail!" was the wild cry which, repeated again and again, with increasing frenzy, went ringing from the foremost craft to the very last. And, before long, the headland on the eastern coast was overrun by mad men and women who, with tears streaming from their eyes and kerchiefs frantically waving, gave free vent to their overwhelming joy. The floodgates of emotion, so long forced to withstand a mighty strain, had been shattered in an in-

stant; and now the torrent, tempestuous, whirling, wild, upleaping, uncontrollable, burst from their very souls.

Salvation was at hand.

All believed so, and the belief possessed them utterly, from those who stood at the edge of the headland transfixedly gazing seaward, to those who shouted with gladness, and the others who, standing yet farther back, bowed their heads while the preacher voiced their thanksgiving to God. In the foremost line, silent and rigid, stood Vytal; in the last, Eleanor Dare, with her daughter, praying. But soon Virginia, slipping her hand from her mother's, rejoined the Indian, to chide him laughingly for having let fall the shell, which now lay in fragments far below. For to these two alone the sails meant little, seeming no more than the wings to which they had likened them. To the White Doe and Dark Eye there was no far-distant home ever calling for its own. Unlike their English neighbors, these two were no foster-children, but inheritors of the land by right of birth. This was their country, this their home. Only here could their happiness mature, and seemingly only apart from the colony could they live as their hearts desired. For that uncertain, wavering shyness and sign of an uncomprehended fear, which long ago Marlowe had noticed, still softened Virginia's eyes with a mystic veil. She was not beloved by the settlers save as a pet bird whose grace and beauty they admired. For she lacked the magnetism of her mother, yet received, perhaps, more frequent praise. There was still that difference between Eleanor and Virginia which Marlowe had defined as the difference between spirituality and mysticism. The one was in all ways a solace, the other pretty to look upon, but never restful, and this lack of restfulness, more than

all else, explains her unpopularity in the settlement of laborers.

To-day, feeling more restless than ever, "Look," she said, "Roger Prat shall pipe to us." With which she led her companion by the hand through the babbling throng to Roger, who, arm-in-arm with his bear, was swaggering here and there, discoursing bombastically on the approaching ships, as though he himself deserved thanks for the benefit.

"How now, Goodman Prat," inquired Virginia, as they joined him; "art going to leave thy flute silent at such a time?"

He turned and, with head on one side, surveyed her narrowly "The pipe pipeth no more," he said, "for the necessary wind hath gone out of my heart."

"Lungs," corrected Virginia, with a silvery laugh.

"Lungs," he assented, gravely; "but, White Doe, see here!" He pointed to a small tabor that hung by his side. "I have brought this drum wherewith to celebrate. Hark to Roger's tattoo!" And, drawing from his belt a pair of drum-sticks, he marched about, with a rat-a-tat-tat-tat-too. "Sing, ho, the taborin, little taborin," he cried, "merry taborin," and his sticks danced furiously on the drum. He was thinking of England, and of the chance that he might return to forgive Gyll Croyden.

But Virginia, pouting, turned away. "That is not music," she said to the Indian. "He is changed."

Hers was the only frown that, until now, had crossed a face that morning. Hilarity laid hold on the jubilant throng, and turned all save the most serious ones to children.

Musket-shots rang out in celebration; cheer on cheer filled the air, until, growing hoarse with their incessant huzzahs, planters, soldiers, traders, wives, daughters, sons, and even lonely widows and or-

phans, still kept waving their arms to the distant ships in silence. And still Roger, with King Lud in his wake, went the round, now gesticulating in the air with both of his drum-sticks, next pointing with one to the sails, and again setting the pair ajig on his tabor in clamorous acclaim.

Suddenly, however, catching sight of Vytal's face, he desisted and hastened to the captain's side. Vytal spoke in a low voice that none but Prat and Hugh Rouse might catch the tenor of his words. "An I mistake not, those ships are not our friends." Roger and Hugh turned, in dismay, to look once more across the water.

Rouse, shading his eyes with a great hand, swore roundly beneath his breath.

"Body o' me!" exclaimed Prat, who for once could say no more.

Vytal had spoken truly. For now that the ships came slowly within range of the watchers' vision, the fact became obvious to one and another on the headland that these were not vessels of English build.

Gradually a desperate silence assumed sway over the colonists, while they advanced anxiously to the cliff's edge. "They are enemies," whispered one.

"Ay, 'fore Heaven, they are not of friendly countenance."

Then a voice rose trembling in a high key, and Ananias, terror-struck, covered his eyes. "Oh, my God! the two are Spaniards from St. Augustine. Look! Look! One is the *Madre de Dios!*"

Vytal turned quickly to the settlers. "Yes, they are Spaniards," he said, harshly, "and one is the *Madre de Dios.* She hath been defeated once; 'tis for us to sink her now."

A low groan ran through the throng. Alarm had stifled hope. But, as none gave answer, Vytal spoke

again. "Let those who are afraid return and seek safety at Croatan. I and my men will meet them."

"Yea," laughed Prat, "right gladly meet them."

But already half the number had deserted, and, led by Ananias, were now stampeding toward their barges on the southern shore. Only the fighting-men and Eleanor remained on the headland. Suddenly an ejaculation from Prat caused Vytal to turn. The foremost of the Spanish vessels stood tentatively with flapping sails, as though undecided, and in another moment a long, rakish-looking craft, propelled by several rowers, had left the ships, and was making its way to the shore. In the prow an officer, gaudily dressed, stood erect, waving aloft a pike, from the blade of which a white flag floated lightly on the breeze. Slowly the long-boat drew nearer, until its stem swished on the sand. Then, stepping out, the Spanish officer, wearing no visible arms, turned to one and another with a lordly insolence, and finally accosted Vytal in English. "I am the admiral," he said, "of our little fleet, and would speak with a person in command."

"I," said Vytal, "govern the colony."

On hearing this the Spaniard started perceptibly and scrutinized the bleak, impassive face with heightened interest. "May I inquire," he asked, with a curious mingling of autocratic condescension and true respect, "concerning your Excellency's name?"

"'Tis the Wolf," replied Roger Prat, impulsively, before Vytal could answer.

The admiral smiled. "Ah, the Wolf! 'tis well for me I seek only an armistice at your hands—a short and friendly truce. We are in sore straits. Having but recently escaped wreckage, we are now like to die of thirst and starvation. I have here the usual conditions of an armistice, which I submit for your con-

sideration," and he handed Vytal a sheet of paper which conveyed, in English, his proposal:

"I. That we be permitted to buy victuals.

"II. That we be allowed to lie off the coast of Virginia without annoyance or molestation until our ships, which are in leaky state, shall have been repaired.

"III. That we be granted the right to come ashore in small bodies for the procuring of lumber and implements necessary in this work of repair, and for supplies, all of which commodities, including any others that may be offered and desired, shall be purchased at a just rate.

"IV. That we, on our part, shall come to land unarmed, your soldiers to have the full privilege of searching us.

'V. That your right and title to Roanoke Island, and such adjacent territory as you inhabit, shall in all ways be respected by us."

Vytal, having read the document aloud, handed it back to its author. "This hath been quickly framed," he said, scanning narrowly the other's face; "or else it was writ before you sighted Roanoke."

The Spaniard laughed uneasily. "I perceive," he said, "that his Excellency, the Wolf, hath eyes which read a man's soul. Yet I myself indited these proposals at seeing your company on the headland. 'Twas in no way preconceived, and that is truth."

"How many men do you command?" asked Vytal, with slow deliberation.

"Threescore soldiers," was the quick response.

"'Tis well," said Vytal, "and we are trebly strong."

"Trebly!" ejaculated the admiral, unguardedly.

"Nay," observed Vytal, inwardly numbering the Indians as allies. "Much more than trebly."

The Spaniard covered his surprise with a yawn. "I trust you will make haste," he said, "for while you delay we starve."

"So be it," assented Vytal, curtly, and turned on his heel.

The admiral bowed and withdrew to his long-boat.

"'Tis our only chance," said Vytal to Eleanor. "We must arm every man, red and white, that, in the event of treachery, we may die fighting."

"Think you, then," she asked, anxiously, "their force is so much the stronger?"

"Beyond doubt, madam, they far outnumber us." His face grew tense, and for a moment almost desperate. "If they gain knowledge of our weakness, we are lost."

He spoke hurriedly to Rouse. "Go instantly to Croatan. Ask Manteo to bring his tribesmen here without delay. Say that I have sent you. Speak, then, to our own people. Adjure them, in God's name, to proceed hither within the hour. Make known the conditions of the armistice. If fear still deters them, and they suspect treachery on the part of our enemies, make no threat, but say that only within this palisado can we hope for safety. At Croatan they could not possibly withstand invaders. Here the fortifications are ready built. Let the people bring all available provisions for a siege, yet mention not the word 'siege.' Say merely that until the Spanish depart we remain here to trade with them." He turned to Prat. "Do you, Roger, go with Hugh, and by your wit compel them to obey. My whole trust is in you both. Make haste!"

Without a word they started off, the giant with great strides, the vagabond with rolling gait, and for once not garrulous, but genuinely grave.

Vytal, returning to the headland, spoke to Dyonis Harvie, who stood near by. "You, Dyonis, assume command of the fortress, where the women and children will look to you for their defence."

For many minutes Eleanor and Vytal stood in

silence, motionless. From far away came the sound of the surf droning on the beach, with which, from beyond the screen of woods between them and the town, a low hum of preparation was blent monotonously. At last they walked to the brow of the cliff whereon stood the watchful culverin, and looked down at the lengthening shadows on the shore.

Small groups of Spaniards and Englishmen were gathered together here and there busy in trade.

"They buy and sell most peacefully," observed Eleanor.

"Yes," said Vytal, "they traffic as friends."

CHAPTER II

"Here, man, rip up this panting breast of mine,
And take my heart in rescue of my friends."
—MARLOWE, in *Edward the Second.*

ON the fourth night after the ships' arrival, the colonists and Hatteras Indians, all of whom, at Vytal's command, had come from Croatan, congressed near the fortress of Roanoke. In the centre of the square a camp-fire of great logs and dried branches roared and crackled cheerfully, while encircling the blaze sat red men and white, some half prone in sleep, others upright and talking. Somewhat apart from the main gathering, and just beyond range of the firelight, were Vytal and Manteo, while, midway between them and a number of sleeping soldiers, sat Virginia Dare and her Indian comrade. Not far away lay Hugh Rouse, sprawled near the outer border of embers, and snoring loudly, while next to him sat Roger Prat, blinking at the fire. In the fortress most of the women and children, under Dyonis Harvie's protection, were slumbering peacefully, while Dyonis himself sat yawning in the doorway. Each of the three entrances to the town was guarded by one or more pickets, well armed. At the northern gateway, which led to Vytal's cabin, a single sentry stood alert; at the southern and nearest, by which Eleanor had made egress that night when Frazer and Towaye had captured her, another soldier kept careful watch; at the main portal on the eastern side

two sentinels paced to and fro with muskets loaded. Furthermore, a body of twelve arquebusiers lay far below on the beach, to make sure that from the Spanish ships no landing was attempted.

To trade at night, or leave the town without Vytal's permission, was forbidden. And perhaps only one person at Roanoke rebelled inwardly against the latter restriction. This was Virginia Dare, whose nature demanded absolute freedom. "Oh, tell me, Dark Eye," she said, as the silence and bondage became unbearable, "why are we compelled to remain here like prisoners?"

"It is the will of our father, the Wolf," replied the Indian. "He seeks to protect his children."

She made an impatient gesture. "Come, Dark Eye, let us ask Roger Prat if we may not go down to the sea for another shell and for my father. Dost know he strangely disappeared to-day and has not been seen again?"

"Thy father disappeared?" exclaimed the Indian.

"Yes, within the forest. But come!" and together they joined the soldier. "Goodman Prat, I pray you give us liberty. Not all the armies of the world can find us an we hide. There are caves, ravines, arbors—"

"Yes," interposed Prat, dreamily, "arbors, grape-arbors."

"Come," she persisted, "take us past the centronel."

With a jerk of his head, as though awaking from reverie, Roger looked up at her. "Nay, White Doe, it is impossible. Will you not sit here and comfort me? I am depressed."

Poutingly, she granted his request, and, patting the grass beside her, indicated an adjacent seat for the Indian. "How now, Roger?" said she. "Why

so glum and owlish? Is 't because your friend King Lud is absent?"

For a moment Prat surveyed her in silence, rolling his eyes, until at length, "Nay," he replied, "I am well accustomed to his Majesty's peregrinations. Oftentimes for a whole week he roves, and never a sight of him. 'Tis but three days now since he went a-nutting. Nay, nay, 'tis not o' the bear I think—not o' the bear."

"Of what, then?"

But, giving no answer, he only blinked and blinked at the fire, so mournfully that many, noticing his look, long remembered it.

Vytal watched him silently.

"He hath even forgot," observed Manteo, "to smoke his pipe of uppowac."

The soldier made no response, but asked, finally: "Art sleepy, Manteo?"

"Nay, most wakeful."

"I, too, am so; but sith for two nights no sleep hath come to me, 'tis essential that I rest. Do you keep watch, and, if aught occurs beyond the ordinary, arouse me instantly." Whereupon, stretching himself at full length, Vytal folded his arms across his eyes.

Nearly all were now lying asleep, and the fire burned very low. Only Virginia Dare, Dark Eye, and Roger Prat seemed wide-awake.

The low tread of the sentinel at the nearest gate told them that safety was assured. The stillness of the town, profound and all-pervading, was broken at rare intervals only by the screech of an owl or the low murmur of voices, while the dreary monotone of the distant surf seemed as it were to accompany the dirge of silence.

Suddenly, however, the sentry's voice, in a low

challenge, caught the quick ear of Virginia, but, as Prat turned apprehensively, she laughed aloud. Then Roger himself shook with merriment. "Body o' me! he hath challenged King Lud, and, I'll warrant, is now calling himself a fool. Behold his Majesty!" And, sure enough, there was the well-known bulky form loping on all fours through the entrance. As it came near the circle of firelight the cumbrous shadow flattened out.

"He's not overjoyed to see you," laughed Virginia, and she would have gone forward to pat the shaggy head, but Prat restrained her.

"Nay, wait. 'Tis a trick of his. He knows well he hath been a deserter, and is full of shame. Look you—his eyes are shut; the prankish monarch pretends to be indifferently asleep. Now take no notice, but out of the corner of your eye watch him. He always comes to me in the end, an I pay no attention to his whimsicality."

Virginia, pleased at any diversion, cast a sidelong glance at the long snout which lay tranquilly between the paws, more in the position of a dog's nose than a bear's. "For once," she observed, "his Majesty is not sniffing at us."

"'Tis his game," declared Prat. "Now watch, and I'll turn my back impertinently."

For some time the huge pate lay motionless. "He's really asleep," said Virginia.

"That may be," allowed Roger, "for I doubt not his three days' roaming has wearied him considerably. He's a cub no longer, and has, I'll swear, lumbago, like myself. Let him lie. But here's a great brute who's slept too long." And Roger poked Hugh Rouse viciously with his foot. Yawning, the giant rolled over, and surveyed them stupidly. "Numskull!" exclaimed Prat, "thank the Lord we look

not to you for protection. I'd sooner trust King Lud, though for the moment even he's a-dreaming."

Virginia, amused at his raillery, cast another look behind her. "Nay," she whispered. "See, he has crawled nearer."

"Oh, has he, indeed!" said Roger. "I'll give him his deserts in time. But first this dwarfling here must explain himself." He glanced down at Rouse. "How now, sirrah?—think you we are safe at home in England? Do your weighty dreams increase our numbers, that are in reality so desperate small? Think you the Spanish force could not swallow us up as thy great maw would engulf a herring? Poor fool, sleep on in thy fond delusion," and, raising his brows in feigned contempt, Roger turned to the silent Indian and Virginia. "Now the lord chancellor shall have the honor of punishing his renegade monarch right merrily."

He rose, turned, and swaggered toward the ungainly shadow.

As if the animal had readily divined his intention, the great nose shifted now this way, now that, irresolutely. "See!" cried Roger, "he creeps away like a beaten hound," and Virginia saw the bowlder-like shadow rolling off toward the palisade.

"Villain!" cried Prat, "come hither," with which he ran forward wrathfully.

But just as he was about to cuff the upraised snout with the palm of his hand, the awkward figure rose, and a glistering light shone for an instant in the fire-glare. With a groan Roger stumbled, and would have fallen, but now a mass of dark fur was flung at his feet, and a man, who had emerged from beneath it, started, quick as a flash, toward the gateway. Uttering a loud oath of pain and anger, the soldier sprang across the bearskin, and, although mortally

wounded, contrived to grasp the stranger. Then, with a great effort, for at each moment the blood spurted from his breast, he threw his captive heavily to the ground. Again and again his antagonist's short blade flashed and buried itself in his arm; yet, flinging himself bodily on the writhing form, Roger held the spy a prisoner.

Even as he fell, a cry from Manteo awoke Vytal, while the others, startled by the commotion, leaped to their feet in wild confusion. Then, above the turmoil, rose Vytal's voice piercingly: "'Tis naught!" For a single glance at the struggling pair and the empty bearskin had told him that a spy was caught.

As the excited colonists gathered about the grappling couple, Roger rolled over in a swoon, and Vytal looked down at the captive, who was in an instant held firmly by Manteo and Rouse.

"It is Frazer," he said, calmly. "Bind him, and take him to the fort."

"Nay," was the prisoner's rejoinder, in a low, musical voice, "'tis his Highness, the Crown Prince."

CHAPTER III

"Oh, must this day be period of my life?"
—MARLOWE, in *Edward the Second.*

AS Vytal turned from Frazer his face changed. The look of cold hate gave way to an even deeper expression of sadness, which, mellowing his bleak visage as the sunset glow softens the outlines of a rock, bespoke tender concern and apprehension.

Around Roger a crowd had gathered, to the centre of which Vytal gravely made his way.

The soldier lay prone and silent, the bearskin, which had been folded, forming a pillow for his head. He had evidently regained consciousness, yet from his bared chest a stream of blood welled slowly. Frazer's weapon had pierced a lung.

Beside him knelt Hugh Rouse, imploring him to speak. "Call me names, Roger; berate me an you will for sleeping; but say 'tis no mortal wound."

A chirurgeon who stood near by shook his head. "'Tis, indeed, mortal," he declared.

And Roger's eyes rolling up to the chirurgeon's face seemed to repeat, "Yes, mortal."

As the firelight was now obscured by the crowd, several soldiers, snatching resinous branches from the blaze, held them aloft to look once more upon their comrade's face. Vytal bent over the dying man. "Dost know me, Roger?"

Slowly the lips parted as the round head shifted restlessly. "Yea, well; and always I shall know

you. Body o' me! not know Captain Vytal—I, Prat, who have followed him through thick and thin? 'Tis impossible."

He raised his head and smiled at Rouse. "And you, too, my dwarfish soul—how could I mistake that shock o' flaxen hair?" He passed a hand over the giant's head affectionately; then, rising with pain to one elbow, turned again to Vytal.

"You have saved us," said the captain, "but at what a cost!"

Prat made a deprecatory gesture. "Ay, thank God! saved you," he replied; "yet have a care. This Frazer hath heard me prating to Rouse anent our weakness. You'll look to it, no doubt, he conveys not the information to that peacock, the Spanish admiral. But, ah me, the young wild-slip hath killed King Lud. My last pet is departed. Oh, why did I not know his Majesty would never crawl away like a whipped cur? In troth 'twas most unnatural. Yet the darkness favored him—the darkness—i' faith 'tis even darker now." With an effort, he put a hand to his belt, and, drawing out the flute that for so long had been silent, held it to his lips. But, without sounding a single strain, he let it fall with one of his old grimaces. "Nay," he muttered, "not a note; ne'ertheless, when I'm gone, 'Be merry, friends; a fig for care and a fig for woe; be merry, friends.'" He sank back exhausted and closed his eyes.

"He is dead," groaned Hugh.

But Roger, with a drawn smile, eyed him sideways. "Not dead by any means, poor dullard. No, not yet dead."

At this his face brightened for a moment, and he groped in the breast of his doublet near the wound. Several fine threads of gold were woven round his

fingers, but no one saw them. "Take nothing from me," he said; and then, withdrawing his hand, smiled almost bitterly. "'Tis just as well I die, for my life, as the song saith, hath been lived to 'please one and please all,' everlastingly 'please one and please all, so pipeth the crow sitting upon a wall.' Well-a-day, let the crow pipe on, but Roger pipeth no longer."

His bulging eyes flashed suddenly in the cressets' glare. "Nay, I'm no piper, but a fighting-man," whereupon, rising once more with a great effort to one elbow, he drew his broadsword and for a moment held it aloft. Then slowly, as the flame died out of his eyes, he pointed with it toward the palisade. "Bury me over there," he said, eagerly, "beyond the town—over there in the glade, Captain Vytal, near the western shore. 'Tis where she danced, you'll remember, and King Lud cut capers before the Indians. There I'll lie in peace, and think o' the old mirthfulness, and sometimes the sound of your guns will come to remind me I'm a soldier." He held out the heavy blade to Vytal. "Lay it unsheathed beside me, captain; also the flute and uppowac pipe." Once again his head fell to the bearskin pillow. "You might shroud me," he added, feebly, "with all that remains of poor King Lud."

"It shall be done as you require," said Vytal, hoarsely.

And now there was silence save for the light rustle through the forest of a new-come breeze, which fanned the tearful cheeks of the watchers and set the many torches flickering so that their light wavered uncertainly across the dying man. Roger's eyes were closed, yet once more his lips parted. "'Be merry, friends,'" and, with an old, familiar smile, he died.

* * * * * * *

When at last day dawned a striking scene was visible on the shore.

In the prow of his long-boat, not over twenty feet from the beach, stood the Spanish admiral, while from the brink of the water Vytal spoke to him.

Farther up the strand twelve musketeers were ranged in line with weapons aimed, not at the long-boat's crew, but at a single figure that stood against the cliff. This form, slight and graceful, was nevertheless distinctly masculine in bearing. With eyes blindfolded, mouth gagged, and hands fettered behind his back, the man awaited his fate calmly.

But the fate was yet unknown. The musketeers stolidly awaited the last signal from their leader, and the signal was delayed.

"You perceive," said Vytal to the admiral, "that your friend's life is in imminent danger. At a word from me he falls, but at the word I desire from you he lives and shall be saved."

The Spaniard bowed haughtily. "Name your conditions," and with a sweep of their oars the rowers drew nearer to the shore. Vytal turned and glanced upward at the headland, from which the colonists were looking down in silent curiosity. Foremost of all stood Eleanor Dare watching him.

He faced about again to address the admiral. "The condition is this: that you abandon to us the *Madre de Dios* in exchange for the prisoner. Your spy hath broken our truce. There are but two available indemnities—the one your ship, the other his life as forfeit. I bid you choose."

An ironical smile crossed the Spaniard's face. "Do you consider his life of so great value?" he asked, banteringly.

"Nay," said Vytal, "I but seek to estimate your

own valuation. This fellow hath boasted of a royal guardian—even the King of Spain."

The admiral bit his lip. "But how am I to make certain that you act in good faith?"

Vytal turned sharply to the musketeers and raised his hand, while his lips parted. The marksmen's eyes came down closer to their aim, and there was a concerted click.

"Stay!" cried the Spaniard, in alarm. "I agree to your proviso."

Vytal's hand fell, and the sharp-shooters stood at rest. "To-night," said the soldier, "we shall be ready to man your vessel."

Slowly the long-boat withdrew, and now Eleanor, having come down from the headland, stood at Vytal's side. Her face was flushed with excited hope and admiration. "You have worked our salvation, captain."

"Nay," he returned, harshly, "not yet."

CHAPTER IV

"This fear is that which makes me tremble thus."
—MARLOWE, in *Edward the Second.*

THE stern discipline of that evening was broken by one of the colonists, who, having earlier entered the town from the western wood, now reeled through the streets, crazed by inebriety and fear. As the gates were not yet closed, he was permitted once more to leave the enclosure, which he did by the eastern entrance. Beyond the palisade he paused for a moment, swaying heavily, and gazed down at the shore.

The moon, in its first quarter, was sinking behind a film of gray clouds. A few traders, Spanish and English, stood bargaining on the beach. The two vessels, without lights, lay motionless at anchor. A number of canoes were hauled up on the sand, their birch-bark sides shining like silver in the moonlight. The man, looking up and down the coast, recognized Vytal's gaunt figure in the distance, and he realized hazily that the soldier was inspecting the coast-guard before returning to the town.

But the blear eyes wandered back to that line of silver craft, and now, with uncertain gait, the lonely man descended from the headland. Then, with a wave of his hand to the contemptuous traders, he stepped into one of the canoes, and, unsteadily seating himself, made his way along the coast with wavering sweeps of his paddle.

On coming at last to that part of the beach where Vytal was giving instructions to the arquebusiers, he paused, and, keeping his canoe several paces from shore, spoke quickly to the soldier. "I am going," he said, pointing with his paddle to the eastward, "away, anywhere, far away."

Vytal turned in surprise. "You're mad."

The other smiled absently, and, waving his wooden blade, held it out toward the forest. "Yes, delightfully mad. Devilish Winginas over there—saw them my own self when I started to go away to the mainland. Long line of red demons waiting—demons 'stremely like those Ralph Contempt described—all waiting to capture the town. You'd better have a care and come away. I'm going away—anywhere—any place whatever, out into the darkness—through the inlet—over the sea—away from it all, from all the danger and trouble, all the nightmares and remorse. I've spent my life retreating, now I'll retreat once more—once more." The moonlight, falling across his face, showed a look so despairing, haunted, and yet drunkenly cheerful, that for a moment Vytal stood transfixed, staring at him, as at an apparition of the night. The bloodshot eyes were wide open and wet with maudlin tears; the hair was dishevelled and damp with the sweat of terror. Yet even now there was a certain weird beauty in the face, a peculiar and exquisite refinement. But from behind the beauty a despicable soul looked out of the eyes, so that even Vytal shuddered as he saw their glance.

Courage stood face to face with naked Fear.

With a look of disgust, Vytal glanced about for another boat, but none was near them.

Slowly the canoe drifted from the shore, its occupant bidding farewell to Vytal with a laugh that

died in a wail. "Return, or I shoot," said the soldier, sternly.

But at this the paddle splashed frantically, and the canoe, now whirling about, now darting out to sea, went farther and farther from the land.

Vytal, for once, hesitated. To shoot was perhaps to kill the man, while to refrain from shooting was almost to countenance his suicide. As a compromise between these two alternatives the soldier took an arquebus from one of his men and fired in the air.

For a second the canoe paused in its outward course, then shot far seaward, and the man, wildly waving his paddle, either in triumph or expostulation, staggered to his feet. At this the frail craft so careened and trembled that before he could stand fully erect a torrent of water rushed in across the gunwale, and Vytal, aghast on the shore, just distinguished his figure, as, with a piercing cry, he tottered, fell sideways, and sank beneath the surface.

"He cannot swim," said one of the arquebusiers, "any better than a gobbet of lead."

Hastily Vytal waded into the water, and, although there were no traces of the unfortunate drunkard, would have struck out toward the upturned craft, had not a deep voice at this instant restrained him. Turning, he saw Hugh Rouse standing on the shore, beckoning to him apprehensively.

"Captain, a force of Winginas attacks the western palisado."

Vytal turned to one of the musketeers. "Bring hither a canoe and search for his body. He is drowned in the swift undertow;" then, with a last searching glance across the silver water, Vytal retraced his steps to the beach.

"To the town, Hugh! I follow immediately." He turned to the arquebusiers. "It rests with you,"

he said, "to hold the Spaniards back from land. Ask no reinforcements. We cannot spare them. Nor yet seek to retreat within the enclosure. You will be refused admittance. Your post is here. Knowing that some of you are the men who would have mutinied on the fly-boat long ago, I give you this opportunity to retrieve yourselves," and, leaving them, he made his way speedily to the town.

As he passed within the main portal it was closed and barricaded, Rouse and a score of the ablest soldiers being left to defend it.

He stopped at the fortress, before which Dyonis Harvie stood on guard, heavily armed. Eleanor was in the doorway. Seeing Vytal, she came out into the square and spoke to him. "Is it well?"

"An hour will show," he answered, quietly.

"Then you fear treachery?"

"No, I do not fear it."

"But you suspect it?"

"Nay, madam, I am fully aware that a general attack is intended. A force of Winginas already threatens our western wall."

She hesitated, seeming loath to speak her mind, yet compelled by a certain distrust to make known her anxiety. "I hope," she said, as though half to herself, "that none of the colonists will seek to leave by the *Madre de Dios* until the issue is certain." Her voice faltered. "It is my duty to tell you that Ananias plans—"

But Vytal shook his head gravely. "Mistress Eleanor, Ananias Dare is dead!"

"Dead!" she gasped, in a vague, incredulous bewilderment. "Dead!"

"Yes; drowned."

A high flush of crimson came to her cheeks and

suffused itself quickly about her temples; then as suddenly died, leaving her wan and pallid.

Vytal, averting his face, while in silence she re-entered the fortress, went slowly to Dyonis Harvie. "Is the prisoner well guarded?"

"Ay, most carefully—in a cell below the fort."

"Your main duties are to protect the women and keep him there;" with which Vytal turned quickly away toward the western palisade.

Save for the light of the stars and of a wavering flambeau here and there, the town was in darkness. And but for the occasional reports of muskets, as the inland pickets fired into the forest at an unseen foe, no unusual sound broke the silence of night.

Yet each minute of that night, winged or halt, slow or quick-fleeting, was to every man big with import and terrible endeavor. The very air that filled their lungs seemed impregnated with suspense.

Here was no camp-fire and lounging throng in the main square, but only gloom and solitude, for the colony, broken up into small commands, stood in alert attitudes, with straining eyes, at every entrance.

The armistice was apparently at an end, yet some few consoled themselves with the fond delusion that the Winginas' intermittent attack had not been inspired by the Spaniards. One or two of these sought Manteo to question him concerning the numbers of his hereditary foemen, but Manteo was not in the town. And, furthermore, not one of his tribe could be found save a few of the women. The Hatteras Indians had disappeared, men and boys, mysteriously.

"They have deserted us," said some of the colonists, despairingly; but the leaders knew that, by Vytal's command, Manteo held his men in waiting far within the western forest. Thus at a signal the

friendly tribesmen could be called upon to fall on the Winginas' rear and decimate them from an ambush.

Yet Vytal rightly conjectured that this attack of the hostile savages was a Spanish feint to draw off his soldiers from the coast; and even now, as he concentrated the pickets in a body to meet a concerted onrush from the woods, a great clamor of arquebuses and heavy pieces arose from the shore.

The Spaniards were landing. A general assault had begun from land and sea. The sound of cannonading, continual and deafening, came from the water, while from the woods the whir and whistle of arrows proclaimed a more insidious attempt.

Vytal returned to the main entrance. It was already besieged. The coast-guard had been overwhelmed. Despite their first stubborn stand, they had gone down like corn-stalks before a hurricane. There was no resisting the stampede. But the gateway, defended by Rouse and his unflinching score, still remained a barrier. Through innumerable loop-holes the defenders had thrust their fire-arms; and now an incessant volley of lead poured out from behind the palisade like a torrent of hail driven sideways by the wind. Still more effective, however, were the culverins on two high flankers that stretched out on both sides of the entrance. These cumbrous weapons, incessantly vomiting huge missiles, so enfiladed the aggressors that a sortie was deemed expedient.

Rouse let the gate swing back quickly, and Vytal, leading a dozen men, sought, by the sheer vigor and unexpectedness of his attack, to press the enemy back over the cliff which they had scaled. This seemed his only chance. By so bold a move he intended to convey the impression that large numbers within the town only awaited a signal to reinforce

him. For, although Frazer, disguised as the bear, had overheard Prat's observation concerning the colony's weakness, there had been, Vytal believed, no possible means of communication between him and the Spaniards.

The one chance, then, seemed to lie in the exaggeration of Roanoke's forces, by manœuvres implying fearlessness and strength.

As Vytal surprised the foremost body of attackers by his sudden sortie, the flanker culverins necessarily became silent, while the men at the palisade loop-holes likewise ceased from firing.

Now on the headland there was a general mêlée, and to distinguish Englishmen from Spaniards was impossible. Only the lofty figure of Vytal, towering above all the combatants, kept the anxious watchers from despair. Sable forms, spirits of the night, met and fell, while, above all, coruscant swords and pike-blades flashed in the calm light of stars; and here and there a face, anguished or triumphant, being lighted up by fitful cressets, seemed not a human countenance, but only, as it were, an expression, bodiless, the mere look of a ghost haunted by reality.

Suddenly, a new glare, high and lurid, broke the gloom. The tree-trunks of the western palisade were now themselves flambeaus, ignited by stealthy Winginas, who, having overcome the outposts, had gained the town.

With a loud cry, Hugh Rouse warned Vytal, whereat the captain fell back to the main entrance. "Quick!" he said to Rouse. "Give the signal to Manteo," and Hugh started toward the western wall.

In another instant the savage enemy would have been surrounded by Manteo's men, according to the preconceived arrangement, but Rouse was unexpectedly delayed.

From the small gateway which led to Vytal's cabin a soldier rushed out to meet him with drawn sword. Even in the faint starlight there was no mistaking that scarred face, with its indrawn eye and yellow teeth, as the lips parted in a smile. The man was Sir Walter St. Magil.

Without a word they met, and their swords crossed, to kill, immediately. But Rouse, taken by surprise, found himself on the defensive, and, before he could swing his heavy weapon effectually, the other's point pried into his sword-hilt, which, being wet and slippery from the moisture of his fingers, slid from his grasp, and fell with a thud beside him.

Nothing daunted, the giant closed in, unarmed, upon his antagonist with so impetuous a rush that St. Magil could not thrust again before a huge pair of arms encircled him completely. His own arms, benumbed by the sudden pressure, hung lifeless, while at one side his sword dangled uselessly.

Their faces touched, their chests, thighs, and legs were locked together as though with iron bonds. And St. Magil's breath came in short, quick gasps, hot on the other's mouth. But at last, gradually, the herculean arms closed tighter and yet tighter about their prey, until suddenly Rouse, hearing a low, cracking sound, knew that his adversary's arms and perhaps a rib or two were broken.

Then, and then only, Hugh released his grasp, and, leaving St. Magil groaning on the ground, rushed away to give Manteo the signal for a counter-attack.

That moment's delay, however, was fatal. For even now a great cry went up from the fortress, and a large force of Spaniards who had effected a landing far to the south surrounded it on every side. They had come through the southern gate, by which

Eleanor long ago had gone in search of herbs for Virginia.

The fort became like a thing alive. From its ramparts a volley of musket-balls rained on the steel headpieces below, while from every aperture long streaks of flame shot out venomously, and in the middle of every streak a ball.

The defenders, under Dyonis Harvie, were offering a brave resistance. The Spaniards hung back behind a natural breastwork of hillocks.

But suddenly a small man, unnoticed, crept close to the fort's rear and from one side surveyed the muzzle of a culverin inquisitively. The gun roared, and then, quick as thought, before it could be recharged, the watcher whistled thrice. Instantly the aggressors sprang up from their cover and assaulted the rear entrance.

But the man who had first crept forward was not content with open onslaught.

In a few minutes the entire rear wall of the fort was enveloped in flames that curled up over the ramparts, and Simon Ferdinando, the incendiary, was groping in a subterranean vault. "Make haste," said a boyishly excited voice. "I am here," and in a moment Frazer, having been liberated by Simon, had entered the main armory.

The fortress no longer belonged to England.

Frazer glanced about the mess-room with a quick, searching scrutiny. It was half filled with a coarse crew of his own arquebusiers, who, bridling their ribald tongues half mockingly as he entered, awaited his commands. A number of women were cowering in one corner. Before them lay the last of their immediate defenders, lifeless or mortally wounded, Dyonis Harvie prone in the foremost line, his wife, on her knees beside him, imploring him to live.

As Frazer looked at the women he bowed to two, about whom the others were gathered in despair. "The king is come, Mistress Dare, according as he promised years ago. He claims his queen."

He turned to the soldiers. "Bear these two to the hovel in which Vytal lived. Do with the others as you will. The town is ours."

CHAPTER V

"Some powers divine, or else infernal, mixed
Their angry seeds at thy conception."
—MARLOWE, in *Tamburlaine.*

IT was not long before Frazer stood alone with Eleanor and Virginia Dare in Vytal's secluded cabin beyond the palisade, and about the cabin a Spanish guard.

The small room was fitfully lighted by a cresset that had been thrust into a chink in the log wall. Opposite the door stood Eleanor, with Virginia at her side, while before her, just within the room, Frazer leaned easily against the door-post, talking in low tones. In the mother's eyes there was a calm determination, in the daughter's as little fear, but no resolve.

"Then you object," said Frazer, languidly, "to being crowned a queen?"

She made no answer. He turned his headpiece about in hand, pouting like a young boy.

"I should have preferred your heart's love," he declared, plaintively, "but that, perchance, will come later." His manner, changing, became forceful. "Oh, believe me, the end hath come. We have played several games, you and I, but this is final; and now, by God! I win! D' you hear—I win! England will never send you aid. This I know from St. Magil, who hath lately been there. Marlowe, the poet, ne'er e'en saw her Majesty to tell her of your plight. His

end came far too soon. 'Twas defending the name of that trull, Gyll Croyden, he died in a brawl at Deptford — these poets will be rakes to the very end." He paused, then spoke slower, with renewed emphasis: "Vytal is surrounded at the main entrance. At a single word from me our force, which now holds the fortress, will go to increase the overwhelming numbers that hem him in. Whether or not I give that word rests entirely with you. Your beloved Ananias is no more. Come, my beauty, I will make you my wife. There! What more can you desire? Oh, you smile ironically; you think we know not the colony's weakness. Did I not hear the jovial Prat proclaim it on the house-tops to his friend the ox? You think I did not convey the information to St. Magil. Pah! 'twas an easy signal. Well I knew that if I came off alive Vytal would range his men before me and offer to hold me as an hostage for our ship. The signal was prearranged. Had you outnumbered us, I was to sink down as if in fear before the musketeers; but were you weaker, I was to stand erect. I stood erect. They knew then, as they know now, the hopeless condition of your colony. *Your* colony, Mistress Dare!" He let the words sink deep into her heart. "Your colony — are you going to cause their complete annihilation by refusing to accept my hand?"

He smiled, and added carelessly: "Then there is John Vytal."

For a moment her eyes flashed, while she drew herself up proudly, but at his last words her chin sank on her breast and a flood of tears blinded her.

Virginia grasped her hand, and, bending forward, gazed up into her face perplexedly. "O my mother, will you not save the colony and Captain Vytal?"

Frazer nodded to Virginia approvingly. "I doubt

it not," he said, "for your mother is by no means heartless."

Eleanor raised her head and gazed at him so expressionlessly that he started perceptibly; all life, all beauty, all consciousness, mental, spiritual, and physical, seemed suddenly to have left her face.

She went forward to him like one walking to death in sleep, and the only words that seemed, as it were, to drip and continually drip relentlessly on her brain, were these: "The end, the end!"

He sprang forward and covered her hand with burning kisses. "Thou'rt mine, Eleanor—mine at last."

But suddenly he paused, startled. A low rustle, or trampling sound, as of innumerable bare feet rushing across the town, had caught his ear. And the voice of Hugh Rouse, far away, called loudly: "Quick, Manteo, this way! Thank God, we may yet save Vytal!"

On this Eleanor drew back with a cry of gladness, and Frazer hesitated. A Spanish soldier appeared at the door. "Shall we reinforce them?"

"Nay, keep your men around this cabin." He turned to Eleanor, snapping his fingers carelessly. "Foh! a *fico* for the battle! You see I value your love higher even than our cause, and whether you will or not, I shall force it from you." With this he started eagerly toward her, arms outstretched and eyes brilliant.

But Eleanor, quick as lightning, drew from her bosom a small poniard and held its point to her breast. "Another step," she said, calmly, "and I stab myself."

He paused, in genuine amazement. His supreme self-love had never dreamed of this—that a woman would rather kill herself than become his wife. "I

no longer need to save others," added Eleanor, triumphantly; "it is myself I save."

For a moment he stood abashed, the very picture of chagrin; but then the light of a new impulse leaped into his eyes.

"Ay, but there shall be another," he cried, "demanding your sacrifice," with which, before she had divined his intent, he grasped Virginia in his arms and carried her to the doorway. "She is almost as beautiful," he sneered, "and much younger."

"Stay!" and Eleanor, swaying as if she must fall, cried out again in anguish, "Stay, I implore you—stay!"

He turned, laughing. "Nay, Mistress Dare; "first throw away thy poniard."

With a strenuous effort to stand erect, she obeyed, and the weapon fell at her feet. Evidently satisfied, he now released his hold on Virginia, and, swaggering forward, with an air of bravado, put an arm about Eleanor's waist, while the daughter, utterly dazed, stood speechless, watching him.

"My dear love," he murmured, caressingly, "rebel not against fate. We shall be very happy as king and queen." It seemed as if there were a tone of real tenderness in his voice, while gently he led her to the door. But her own voice was silent as the grave, and again her whole being seemed hopelessly inert.

Before passing out he bent over her, and, with both arms, crushed her to him in a tense embrace. Then he started back and his face went pale as death.

A loud clash of steel, a roar of many voices, a whirlwind seemingly, and Vytal stood facing them in the doorway.

Like a flash Frazer drew his rapier, but too late.

The soldier, infuriated beyond control, thrust deep and deep again.

Frazer fell.

Vytal turned to Eleanor. "Come away, quick, by the rear entrance. Manteo and Rouse have overcome his guard."

The wounded man groaned pitifully. "I pray you send me a priest," he pleaded. "There is yet time for a short shrift. Your heretic parson will do an there's none other."

"I have no messenger at hand," said Vytal, "and cannot go myself."

At this moment, however, a slight dusky figure stood in the doorway, to which Frazer motioned feebly. It was Dark Eye.

"Send him," said Eleanor, mercifully.

"Nay, for he must guard Frazer."

"But the man is dying."

"Nevertheless," said Vytal, bitterly, "he is not yet dead."

"Then let Dark Eye bind his arms, though it seems cruel."

Vytal assented, and in a moment the captive lay bound hand and foot with thongs of hide from the Indian's girdle.

Virginia came to her mother. "I will go with Dark Eye."

Eleanor rested a hand on her daughter's head, and turned to Vytal. "Is it safe?"

"Yes, with him."

Together Virginia Dare and Dark Eye left the room, only hesitating for a moment beyond the threshold to turn and wave farewell. "Have no fear," said Manteo's son. "The Winginas are put to flight; the Spaniards have left the town. Later we meet you on the shore." The cresset flared high; its radiance fell across those two slight figures side by side in the near darkness.

The old world and the new had plighted troth, and here were the symbols of an everlasting union.

In another instant the picture had vanished—White Doe and Dark Eye were hidden in the forest.

"Now come," said Vytal to Eleanor, and together they left the cabin. "We have won," he declared; "yet lost completely."

She glanced up at him with renewed apprehension, questioningly. In silence he led her to the shore. "See," he said, and she looked up to the headland. A sheet of flame sprang heavenward from the town. "And look!" Two shadows were receding slowly southward. "Those are the enemy's vessels."

"Then we are exiles once again."

The soldier inclined his head. "Yes, exiles. England will never know of our existence; history will account us futile in all our endeavors, and inexplicably lost." His voice sank lower. "Five Englishmen remain alive besides myself."

A cry escaped her lips. "'Tis impossible!"

"Nay, 'tis true."

"But why, then, do the Spaniards beat a retreat?"

"Because Manteo's force, though fatally delayed by Hugh's encounter with St. Magil, arrived in time to surprise them, and because Frazer kept his guard apart from the main attack."

She rested her hands on his arms and came very close to him. The glare of the burning town illuminated his face, showing an expression that even she had never pictured. The stern tensity was relieved, the despotic tyranny of his mouth, the imperial crown of deep-cut lines on his brow, the portentous fire of his eyes—all had been subdued beneath the touch of love. Drawing her closer, he kissed her forehead reverently.

The darkness of night had lost its meaning. The

merciless fire was seen no more save as they found it reflected in each other's eyes.

They were one.

Yet it was all so essentially natural that they experienced no surprise nor wonder in the realization of their unity. It seemed but the end of a primordial beginning, the reversion to their souls of a pre-natal heritage, which but for a season had been withheld that by sorrow and suffering its perfection might be assured.

For long they stood in silence, their very beings seeming to co-blend, each the other's complement, both a perfect whole.

At last Eleanor spoke, and he felt her tremble with the words. "Let us never again speak the name 'Frazer' even within ourselves."

"Nay, never," he said. "I thank God he hath gone from out our lives."

But Vytal's thanksgiving was premature.

Frazer lived. In the cabin on the cliff above them he lived and moved. Slowly, and with great pain, he contrived, by working his way on knees and elbows, to reach the wall, high up in which the torch still sputtered fitfully. Then, although a stream of red had marked his passage across the room, he placed his bound hands between the logs and, with a strenuous exertion, raised himself until he stood unsteadily upon his feet. And now it was not only the cresset's light that flashed in his blue eyes. A look of victory surmounted the expression of pain, as, stretching out his arms, he held the wrists immediately over the torch's flame. The fire scorched and blistered his white skin, burning deep and slowly. At the last his teeth, gnashing in agony, met through his underlip, but still he allowed the flame to work its will. For the thongs that bound him,

being damp with blood and perspiration, had not yet been severed.

Finally, however, burning like fuses, they parted slowly and fell to the floor. Then, bending forward, he unbound his ankles, stifling a moan as his scorched fingers untied the knots. Suddenly he was free; and, hastening as best he might to a lifeless Spanish soldier who had been killed in guarding him, he was in a moment not only liberated, but armed as well with a musket ready primed.

Having thus provided himself, he once more fell to his hands and knees and crawled, like some dying animal, into the forest. With a superhuman stoicism and determination, he descended by the winding path that led from Vytal's cabin to the shore, while a circuitous trail of blood marked his progress.

At the wooded margin of the beach he paused and, leaning against a tree, staggered to his feet.

Two figures stood before him, distinctly visible in the light of the consuming flames.

But, as he raised his weapon, one of the figures moved.

Vytal had heard a rustle of leaves, yet the warning sound came all too late.

A short tongue of fire flashed beneath the branches, almost simultaneously a musket-shot rang out, and Eleanor fell prostrate on the sand.

A cry like the death-note of a soul rose from Vytal, and then the soldier's face, in the first instant terribly anguished, was transformed to the face of wrath incarnate. His eyes were blue flames.

He rushed to the strip of woods, with sword quivering.

But Frazer lay dead, his face, lighted softly by the stars, showing no malevolence in its smile, more than ever boyish, guileless, and amused.

CHAPTER VI

"My heart is as an anvil unto sorrow,
Which beats upon it like the Cyclops' hammers,
And with the noise turns up my giddy brain."
—MARLOWE, in *Edward the Second.*

"Thus shall my heart be still combined with thine
Until our bodies turn to elements
And both our souls aspire celestial thrones."
—MARLOWE, in *Tamburlaine.*

VYTAL turned automatically and, with his old, martial tread, crossed the sand to Eleanor. At her side he knelt for a moment transfixedly in silence, then sank down upon her and grasped her to him as if in an effort to revivify her lifeless form by the sheer might of his love and grief.

But now a dark shadow, seemingly no more tangible than the shadow of Death, emerged from the forest and stood over them.

"My brother, grieve not; perchance life is yet within her." The Indian bent down and listened. "I hear no breath," said Manteo, at last, "nor heartbeat. Her kirtle is stained with blood."

"Ay," said Vytal, "she hath left me."

The Indian pointed westward. "Come, my brother, let us bear her to my people. They have gone to the main, and your countrymen with them. There, far from the sea and evil ships, they will live in peace. Thy Spanish enemies all have retreated before my men. Come, my brother, the voice of the forest calls

you. There is no other way. Did not the stars at thy birth foretell that thou shouldst be a queen's defender and the brother of a king? A queen's defender thou hast been; the brother of a king I beseech thee to be always. Am I not that king of the prophecy? Is not the depth of the forest, solitary and ever dark, the fitting home for one in whose soul all happiness lies buried? My brother, come!"

Vytal returned his gaze in silence, neither granting nor denying the earnest plea.

"John Vytal, you number but six Englishmen in all. To remain is to murder thyself, e'en though thine enemies, Ferdinando and St. Magil, have retreated hastily in a canoe to the Spanish vessel. On the mainland we shall be safe, if upon thee we can depend. The man of God and Margery Harvie, the White Doe and Dyonis, all have started thither under the guardianship of thy servant, Hugh Rouse, who believed you wholly safe with my people. Thus, with thee, there are but three warriors in all. Shall the greatest of these not go, as he hath always gone, to the place where he is most needed?"

"Ay," said Vytal, vaguely; "that is here. Let us defend the town!"

But Manteo pointed to the palisade, across which the first dim light of dawn was slowly breaking. A gray mist or dust was rising from the enclosure and floating softly out to sea. "Those are the ashes of your Roanoke settlement," said Manteo, "which the breeze would bury far away. The fortress lies smouldering, and much of the palisade as well. All is lifeless."

Vytal watched the gray veil unwind itself across the headland. This, then, was a fitting symbol of the climax in which all the fortitude, patience, endeavor, exertion, prayer, and yearning of years had

culminated. Ashes! All gray ashes—the hope of England and of himself.

Finally he turned to Manteo, with a deeper consciousness, and stooped to raise Eleanor in his arms. But the Indian, who had watched her face intently, restrained him. "Wait, my brother, there is yet hope. I will instantly seek two herbs in the forest. 'Tis possible the one will heal her wound, the other awake her from sleep," and, so saying, he entered the woods.

Once more Vytal knelt beside her, while slowly the dismal drone of the surf seemed to creep nearer, until, entering his brain, it wore all thought away. To reason was impossible, to strive for reason a torture that racked him through and through.

Yet at last, appearing to have aroused somewhat from his stupor, he drew his rapier, and, passing his fingers over the blade, muttered: "The bodkin, the little bodkin!" with which—worse, far worse, more terrible than any cry or moan—a laugh, a loud, harsh laugh, came from the broken heart of the man who had rarely been heard to laugh before.

He let the rapier-hilt fall softly to the sand, yet held the point in one hand, and with it touched the artery of his wrist. He was conscious now of one thing only—utter failure! He felt certain that Eleanor, with all his hopes, had left him. It was but the natural result of his life-long battle against Fate.

"I am alone," he said.

For many minutes the rapier-point, moving imperceptibly, scratched his skin. Yet he made no thrust, for the horribly incongruous hilarity of his expression gradually died away, leaving his face once more grave and unrelaxing.

Suddenly he rose and stood as if on guard, not against himself, but another. At this he called aloud, as though Rouse stood near. "Quick, seek Manteo

and the tribesmen! Bid Dyonis protect his charges to the end. See to it that Frazer is shackled heavily. We win!" His eyes flashed. "Send to me Roger Prat and Marlowe. They are men. Ho! Marlowe, come, come quickly to my aid! Is 't possible thou hast forgot that night on the bridge when side by side we fought to save her?" He paused, thrust into the darkness, then reeled and let fall his blade. "O my God—I dream." And, sinking down once again beside Eleanor, he looked first into her pallid face, and then at the shroud of ashes that was borne out lightly to be folded with the veil of the sea. Both mists, gray and commingling on the water, seemed the cerements of his dead ambition. For not only the sea had failed him, but the land as well. And this was his only message to England—an ephemeral breeze, ash-laden, from the West he had come to win.

The cries of many birds, awakening, filled the air. The stars, paling slowly, died. The breeze stirred summer's heavy foliage mournfully.

Vytal shut the light from his eyes, and from his ears the sounds of morning. With head bowed he then relived his life. And the moments when he had been with Eleanor rose pre-eminent above all other memories. He thought of the court, of how by his glance toward her he had been deprived of knighthood. He recalled vividly the fight on London Bridge, and once more saw her standing in the Southwark gateway. He remembered their meeting on the fly-boat, and first saw her praying in the lanthorn-light, then leaning on the bulwark, when they two had been alone in a world of mystery. At the last she was bending over him as he lay in the armory after the battle of the ships. Once again her voice was calling, "John Vytal."

The repetition of that far-off tone seemed a living echo from his heart.

"John Vytal."

He moved slightly, and, as if in a waking sleep, looked down at Eleanor; then started, and, bending closer, strove for an answer to the dream.

In very truth her eyes were open.

"Eleanor."

"Yes, I live."

His hand swept across his forehead. "O God, 'tis a dream—again a dream."

Yet now another hand touched his brow, and, where sight had failed, that single touch convinced him.

"I am not alone," he said.

She grasped his hand feebly. "Nay, not alone. I think 'twas a trance. All the grief, the sudden happiness, the terror, the joy, o'ercame me. Yet—yet—I am sore wounded." Her eyes closed; she breathed with an effort. "Whence came the shot?"

"From Frazer, even as he died."

An expression, first of pain, then of absolute peace, crossed her face; but she made no rejoinder, for strength again had failed.

He brushed back a strand of hair from her forehead, stifling a deep moan. For once his very soul seemed falling to an abyss of fear. Fatalism was overcome by yearning, the power of endurance by the acute agony of doubt. Uncertainty laid an icy chill upon his spirit—the spirit of a child lost in the universe. Essential grief stood face to face with essential joy, each expecting, yet despairing of the victory. And the result of this meeting seemed to ravage the elements of being.

Once more Eleanor gazed up to his anguished face.

"Strength returns," she said, with a wan smile.

He trembled and turned toward the forest, con-

sumed by impatience of the soul. "Manteo hath gone for healing herbs," he said. "O God, spare her to me!"

Long he stood with head bowed and eyes gazing into her face; long he stood, a bleak rock of the shore, stern, rigid, fixed, striving to force upon himself the utter calm of self-surrender and finality.

But at the last she stretched out her arms and drew him closer to her. "God is good," she said. "In my heart he tells me I shall live."

Yet even now, as the spirit of promise seemed to be breathed into their souls, Eleanor, reading Vytal's face, realized that beneath all his silent hope that word "failure" had not been obliterated from his great masculine heart. For the colony of Roanoke was no more.

"Dost not see," she asked, brokenly, "that success is ours? . . . Of a surety, never again will Spaniards seek to land on this Virginia shore." Her words were scarcely audible. "Their leader is dead, their lesson learned. . . . Future generations will find here a perfect security . . . because we, the first, have suffered . . . and yet won." She raised herself to one elbow, bravely subduing her faintness, and pointed toward the headland. "Look."

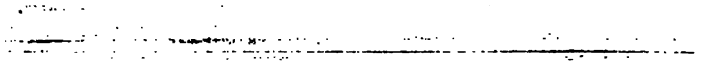
The two mists—the mist of ashes and of the ocean—were gray no longer. The first flush of morning suffused itself over sea and land.

Eleanor's eyes sought Vytal's, but now from the light he turned and looked steadfastly at the broad, deep forest of the west, with prophetic resignation in his gaze, as at a world not wholly lost, yet only by others to be won.

Her hand touched his gently.

"I am not alone," he said; "nay, not alone."





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